LET THERE BE LIGHT

a Moral Orel fanzine

Lauren | Moralton University

For most of my life, I thought there was no such thing as a good Christian.

I was only three years old when 9/11 happened. As is the case with most things that happen when you're that young, I don't remember it at all. Still, my mom says it rattled me enough that I started misbehaving more at daycare and drew a lot of disturbing pictures of the fire and wreckage. I wonder if that was a common coping mechanism for other children traumatized by watching a mass casualty on live TV or if I was just particularly sensitive.

What I do remember about 9/11 are the years of rampant Christian nationalism that followed. It was inescapable and manifested in ways big and small. Whenever George W. Bush appeared on TV, my parents would talk about how he was destroying the country. Jokes about Muslims and Arabs were common among my churchgoing classmates on the playground. I stayed up late to watch *The Colbert Report* with my dad and laughed at segments about Fox News' fabricated panic over the war on Christmas. Pledging allegiance to America, our one beautiful nation under God, at school each morning was treated with the utmost importance.

My disdain for Christianity didn't end with the political atmosphere. A lot of the girls who bullied me in school were Christians who now have Bible verses in their Instagram bios. A boy from a conservative family made cruel remarks about a lesbian couple that lived on his street and were friends of my family. My godfearing uncle stole from my parents and left the money he owed them to his church when he died. Many older people I knew touted Ronald Reagan as the greatest president of all time – I learned later on that the man they revered, among so many other horrible things, let tens of thousands of gay men die of AIDS because of his faith.

As far as I could tell, Christianity was antithetical to kindness and compassion. So in high school I decided I was an atheist. I had never needed to hide behind the Bible to make everyone think I was a good person. I could do that just by being decent to others.

My views on Christianity didn't change until I watched *Moral Orel* for the first time in 2024.

In a lot of ways, *Moral Orel* is a product of its time. It smartly satirizes the sociopolitical climate I grew up in, and I don't think *Moral Orel* would have been the same show we all love without the influence of Bush-era Christian nationalism. However, if someone had told me the show was written in the 2020s, I would have believed them. The thing about history is that it repeats itself – and I'll be damned if this country isn't currently experiencing *The 2000s, Part Two: Electric Boogaloo.*

Things today are unnervingly similar to how they were when I was a kid. Fearmongering around immigrants has led to a surge in unlawful deportations by ICE. Public support for LGBTQ+ rights, particularly those of transgender individuals, is waning. Reproductive rights are being stripped away, now without the protections of Roe v. Wade. Thoughts and prayers are the only response when children are gunned down in their classrooms. We're in a recession. The job market is dismal, and layoffs are a looming threat over the heads of people who are gainfully employed. One of the president's top priorities is a tax cut for the wealthy. In the Middle East, American tax dollars are funding Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza and wars with neighboring countries. And at the core of so many of these problems is a political party that claims to be driven by their Christian values.

The citizens of Moralton are a lot like the Christians I've known my entire life. They spew hatred and bigotry in everyday conversation. They fear people who are even the slightest bit different from them. They worship the second amendment and the star-spangled banner. They weaponize their faith against others and use it to shield themselves from accountability and personal growth. It is because of these things, not in spite of them, that they consider themselves to be perfect Protestants. They are so sure of their own righteousness that they have even designated their church as being "God's favorite."

It would have been easy to walk away from the show with a sense of vindication, but by the time I reached the final episode my feelings were much more complicated. Orel Puppington made me see Christianity in a different light, one that was hopeful and somewhat bittersweet. Don't get me wrong – I'm still not a Christian, I didn't have a come-to-Jesus moment and I never will, but I can't deny that Orel changed my perception of what Christianity can be.

I've seen some people describe Orel as being too good or too pure for Moralton. I don't think that's true. Orel is easily led astray by the people around him and has committed multiple crimes and misdemeanors. He isn't perfect and to pretend that he is diminishes his character. In my eyes, what sets Orel apart from the rest is that his faith is rooted in love, kindness, and empathy for others. The Bible's teachings inspire him and guide him to live a life that would make his own personal hero Jesus proud.

Orel repeatedly goes out of his way to help those less fortunate than himself. He donates the birthday money he received from his grandfather to the church tithe and even buys crack from a dealer because he sincerely believes he is helping someone in need.

He is nonjudgmental toward those who are considered outcasts. When Tommy is labeled intellectually impaired by the school, Orel jumps at the opportunity to be his helper and protects him and the other special needs students from bullies, albeit in a misguided and unintentionally ableist manner. He recognizes the genuine warmth under Stephanie's edgy exterior and remains friends with her despite her atheism, sexuality, and Clay's insistence that she is only pleasant because she is different.

Orel is forgiving, even to those who have caused him harm and may not be deserving. He looks past Joe's bullying and tendency toward taking advantage of his kindness because he can see that Joe is struggling. He even shows forgiveness to his father after months of radio silence and Clay claiming to be glad he shot Orel. On the same day that he decides there is nothing worth honoring about his father, he is able to extend a gentle hand when Clay outs himself as gay in front of his family and gets rejected by the man he loves.

When Orel deviates from his core beliefs, it is almost always because he followed an adult's misguided teachings. The adults of Moralton approach their faith in a much different way than Orel does. They go to church and pray to God in the name of fear, greed, desire, and self-preservation. Their faith is a means to an end and a tool to justify their own wrongdoing. Orel does not see a problem with the color of Billy Figurelli's skin until Reverend Putty tells the congregation that only white people are made in God's image. He does not go around inflicting senseless violence onto others until Clay tells him that the only way to defend God's righteousness is by hurting others before they can hurt you. It is not Orel's faith that leads him to do the wrong thing; it is his trust in these adults that allows the teachings he holds dear to become corrupted.

So maybe Christianity itself isn't the problem in America either. Jesus honestly sounds like a pretty cool guy – I understand why Orel likes him so much. He was a brown-skinned Palestinian man who told us to love immigrants just the same as everyone else, to help the poor and the sick and the persecuted, to abandon hate and violence in favor of love and peace. If the Christian politicians and leaders who claim to be devout followers of Jesus were to follow his teachings, America would probably be a pretty great place to live.

Unfortunately, I don't think the Christian right will ever reflect on their actions and realize their faith has become corrupted by wealth and power. Creating a more equitable world doesn't serve their interests. There's no money to be made from cutting ties with the NRA and AIPAC, raising taxes on billionaires, or divesting from the military industrial complex. Funding healthcare and social welfare programs and advancing the rights and protections of marginalized people doesn't protect the power of the people at the top. I wish I could be more optimistic, but it's hard to be optimistic in times like these.

In lieu of optimism, I think we could all benefit from taking a page out of Jesus's book. Anyone can do it. There are a lot of Christians out there that make it obvious going to church isn't a prerequisite to practicing kindness and compassion for others. We can all make an effort to protect those more vulnerable than us, to help those in need in whatever way we can, to extend love and grace to those who feel hopeless. It won't always be easy. Sometimes it will feel really hard and that's okay. When things are hard and all you want to do is give up, just ask yourself –

WHAT WOULD OREL DO?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

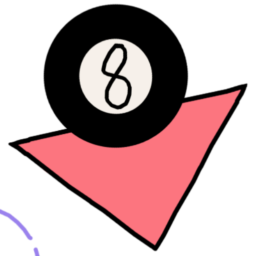
2 | What Would Orel Do? **Lauren**
7 | Bookstart **Rusty**
8 | Foreword **Mia Lea Kahn**

I. REFRACTION **neverfilth**

10 | Home **otorin**
11 | YOUR NEW MORALTON HOME **amvipod**
12 | Spectrum of Holy Light **Barb D'Wire**
13 | Christina & Friends **Dr-Chosenberg**
14 | My Prayer **PossessedPasta**
15 | Motionless **Cherrytastiq**
16 | Get It Right **Cherrytastiq**
17 | Consume **rismortiis**
18 | Nesting **Laura-t-draws**
19 | Thirst = Loneliness **neverfilth**
20 | Hysterical & Useless **PEGASO**
21 | Grapes But Not Wine **Dr-Chosenberg**
22 | Cosplay Party **Various Artists**
24 | Pentimenti **Orozitzkasb**
25 | Seasonal Arrangement **neverfilth**
26 | The Promise **Sketch**
28 | A Real Person **sillygirlscribbles**
29 | A Game of Fanart Telephone **Various Artists**
30 | Just a Bunch of Ms. Secondopinionsons **TheToonyGiulia**
31 | The Phenomenon of Light **aveisure**
32 | Maturity **Hatteri**
34 | Statesota Executive Order #44 **Logan M & Joe I**
36 | Stephanie's Collection **Radical Robot**
37 | My Reverend **Kacy Raider**
38 | Putty's Sermons **Antyoneelse**
40 | The Proposal **Jess**

II. REFLECTION **Cherrytastiq**

42 | From the Desk of Sally O **Sally O**
44 | Moralton University Pamphlet **Moralton University**
45 | Moralton University Press **Moralton University**



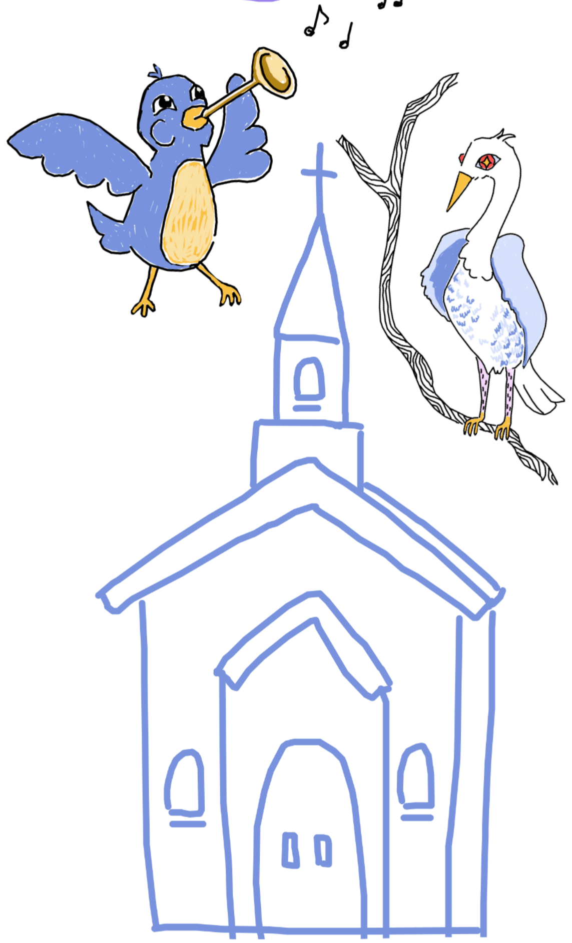


TABLE OF CONTENTS

LTBL IS
NOT
ALRIGHT

ICE CREAM Candy Cookie cake

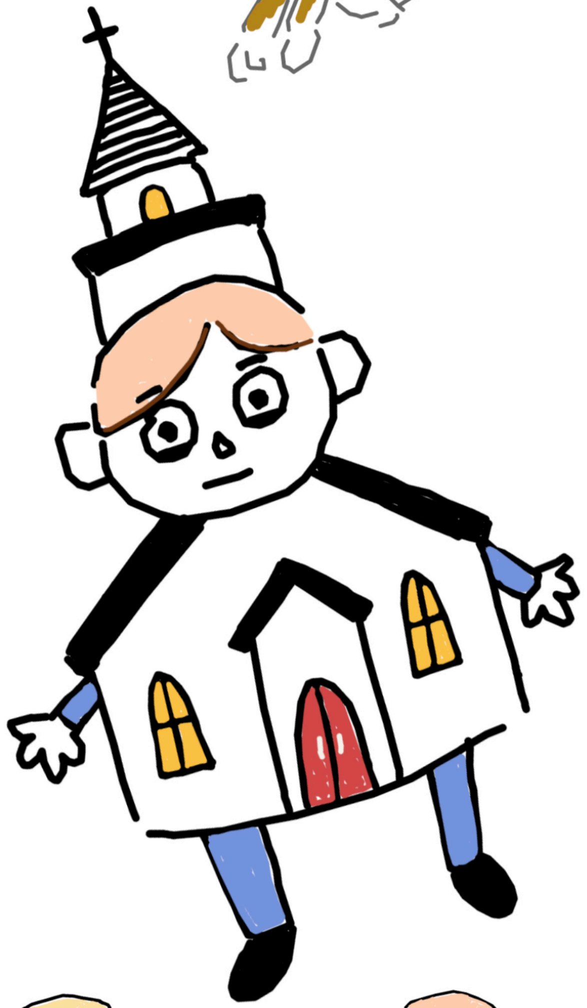
46 | Mr. Self Destruct **Gio**
47 | Cat on a Clay Brick Roof **Lili G**
48 | Living in a Real Life Statesota **Thomas Richardson & Sul04**
49 | From the Mouth of the Preacher **Katie**
50 | Moral Orel Dead Sea Scrolls **Various Artists**
52 | Church Orels **Mia Lea Kahn**
54 | Le Festin **Dr-Chosenberg**
55 | The Lovers **Gio**
56 | Father & Son **TANblaque**
57 | Scrapbooking my Son(ny) **Rook Thomas**
58 | La Goutte **Dr-Chosenberg**
59 | Mirror Gazing **purinbones**
60 | Blind Thirst **bumblingbabooshka**
61 | Orel's Nature **maryhanaae4**
62 | From the Desk of lali **lali**
64 | A Child's Memory **aether**
65 | Mend **Sarah Foley**
66 | MORAL ORCANA: Understanding a Fool's Journey **sinvilles**
70 | That Reminds Me **Maggie Woods**
72 | Moralton Gothic **Jonnie**

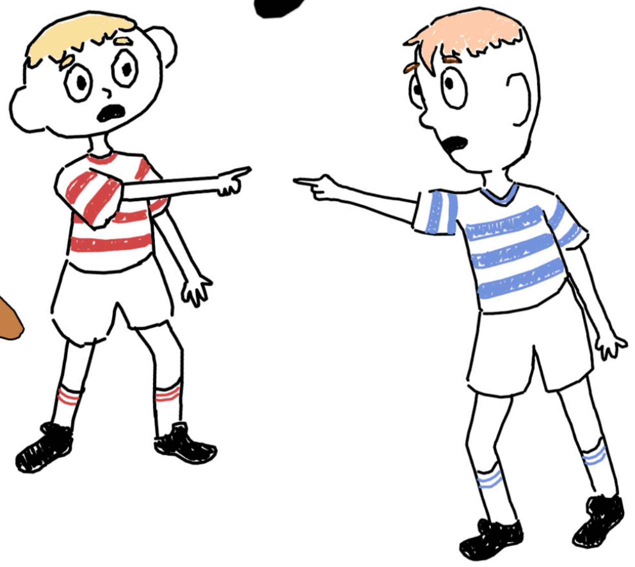
III. EMISSION **sinvilles**

74 | Sad Story Hour **Joe I & sinvilles**
75 | The Second Coming **RodentSlime**
76 | She's Got The Goods **time out tales**
77 | Transference **sternin**
78 | Sacrifice **cottoncandycraze**
79 | Dark Lord Make My Runners Win **Laura-T-Draws**
80 | Sins of the Father **PossessedPasta**
81 | Fathering Is Not Something That Perfect Men Do **neverfilth**
82 | Man/Not Worth It? **Lucy & Deercervidae**
83 | Sacrifice/Repressive Thoughts **Lucy & Deercervidae**
84 | On A Saturday **Deercervidae**
85 | Mother & Child **Luna G**
86 | Orel & Grandpa **Maggie Woods**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

87 | Falter	Sarah Foley
88 | Puppetry	rismortiis
89 | Waves	alois
90 | We All Need People Who Aren't Mean to Me	Mera
91 | Another Pour	Clara Winters
92 | Feels Warm	Deercervidae
93 | For Kim	cwunshine
94 | Jerkoff Basket Case	Sonoma Camozzi
95 | Florence	Xandy Hurley
96 | I Should've Known	Riz Daleney
97 | Let's Have Freudian Nightmares With Mama	neverfilth
98 | Destruction Creates	Bowledburrito
99 | God Aligned the Stars to Bring Us Together	thesockdrawer._
100 | Smoke & Mirrors	coi-arts
101 | Idle Hands are the Devil's Playthings	boggle
102 | Always Right There	Maggie Woods
103 | Valentine	cwunshine
104 | Émission	sternin
IV. LET THERE BE HYPE	neverfilth
106 | Orel's Travels Spread	Orel's Travels
108 | Making Orel & Setting Him Free	Jay K
109 | Exhibits: Props	Team Orel
110 | Afterword	Team Orel
111 | Exhibits: Interviews	Team Orel
112 | Blurbs	The Moral Goats, Various Artists, Backers & Contributors
116 | Whiteboard Mural Spread	Various Artists
118 | Appendices	Various Artists
120 | Staff Credits	Staff





GOD'S IMAGE ONLY
EGGS SUCK!!!
RANDY

Foreword

by Mia Lea Kahn

On December 13th, 2005, *Moral Orel* premiered on [adult swim] with what was technically its first episode, *The Best Christmas Ever*— which also happened to be the Season 1 finale.

With no prior introduction to the characters or tone of the series, audiences were unexpectedly dropped into an emotional climax under the guise of a pilot. Some fans speculate that this unusual rollout contributed to the show's early cancellation; others point to the infamous episode *Alone*. Whatever the cause, it's clear *Moral Orel* struggled to find its audience during its original run.

But time has been kind to Orel. In the years since its cancellation, the series has found a devoted and growing community of artists, animators, and fans who recognize it for what it truly was: a show far ahead of its time.

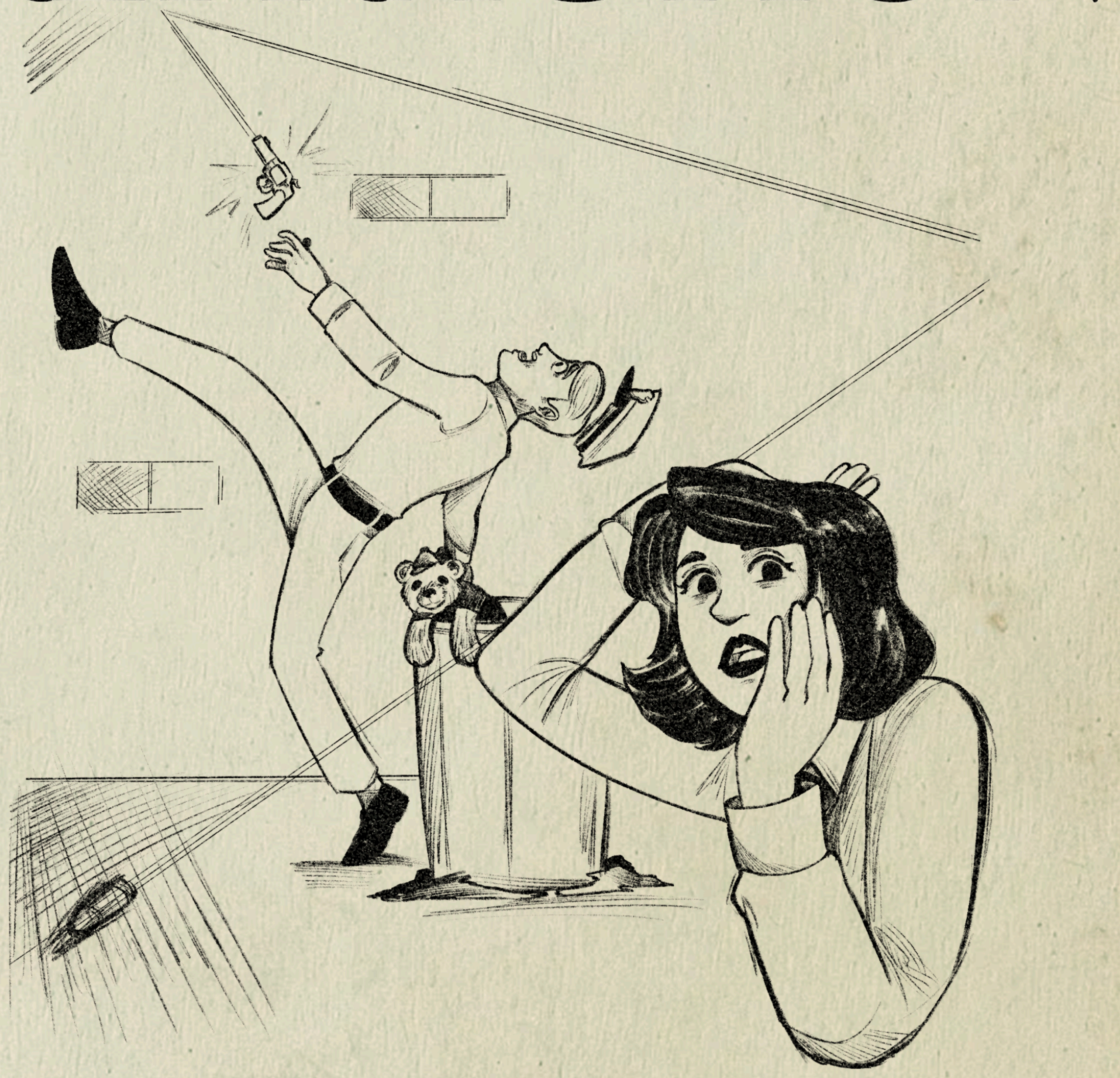
Created by Dino Stamatopoulos, *Moral Orel* is now widely known as "the show that was too depressing for TV", a reputation that, while accurate in tone*, undersells its innovation. Long before the rise of adult animated drama/comedy's like *BoJack Horseman* or *Rick and Morty*, *Moral Orel* dared to blend stop-motion animation with layered emotional storytelling, biting satire, and sincere vulnerability. It carved out space for a new kind of adult animation, and its influence is still felt today.

This zine is a celebration of the show's 20th anniversary and the incredible community that has formed around it. We're so grateful to honor a series that challenged norms, redefined what animated television could be, and left a lasting mark on everyone who loved that little puppet.

Here's to *Moral Orel*, the little show that never really ended.

*Moralton University's Note: We wouldn't say this is accurate- if you only watched *The Lion King* up until Mufasa's death, you would think it's a pretty depressing movie, too!

REFRACTION



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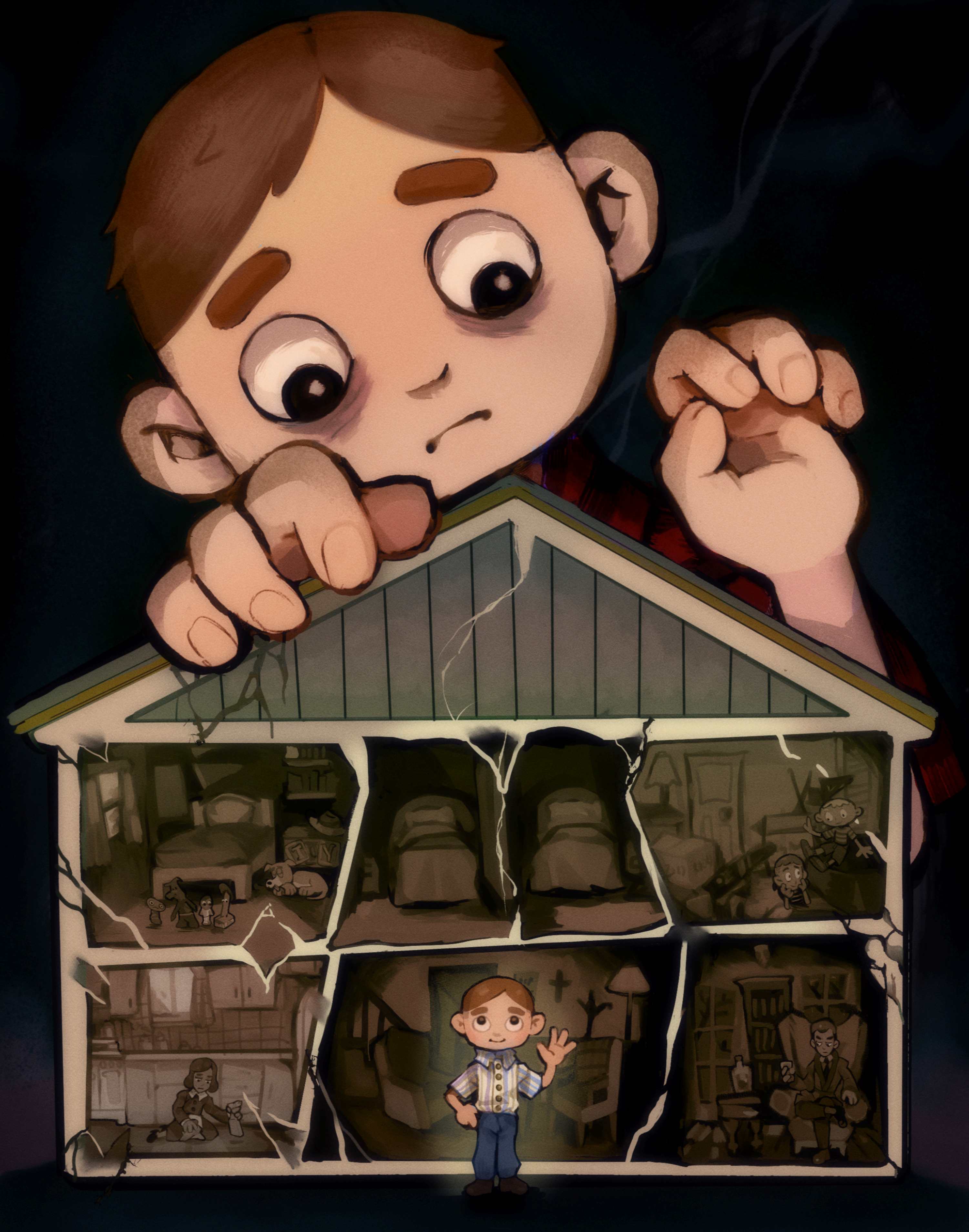

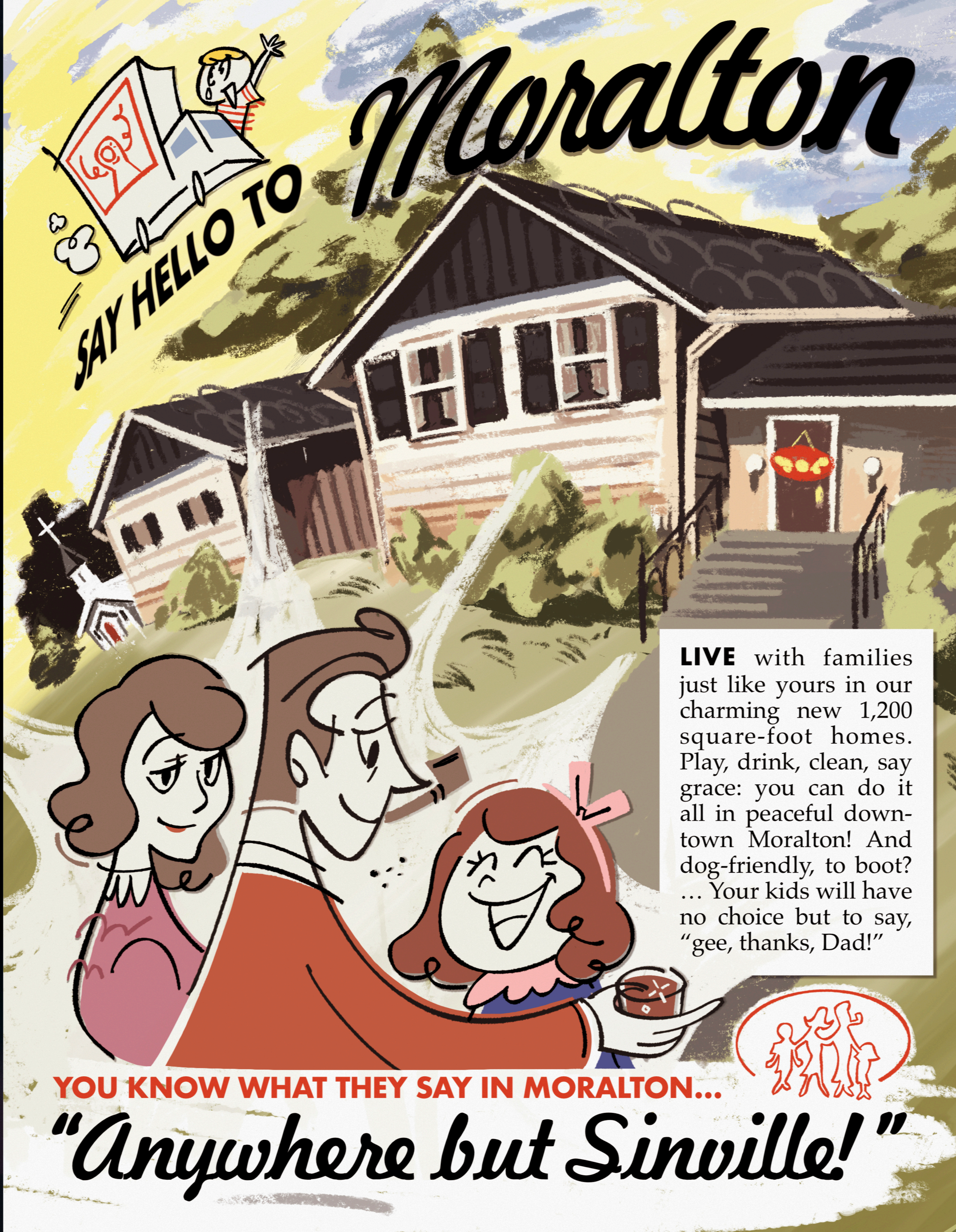
SAY HELLO TO
Moralton
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY IN MORALTON...
"Anywhere but Sinville!"

LIVE with families just like yours in our charming new 1,200 square-foot homes. Play, drink, clean, say grace: you can do it all in peaceful downtown Moralton! And dog-friendly, to boot? … Your kids will have no choice but to say, "gee, thanks, Dad!"

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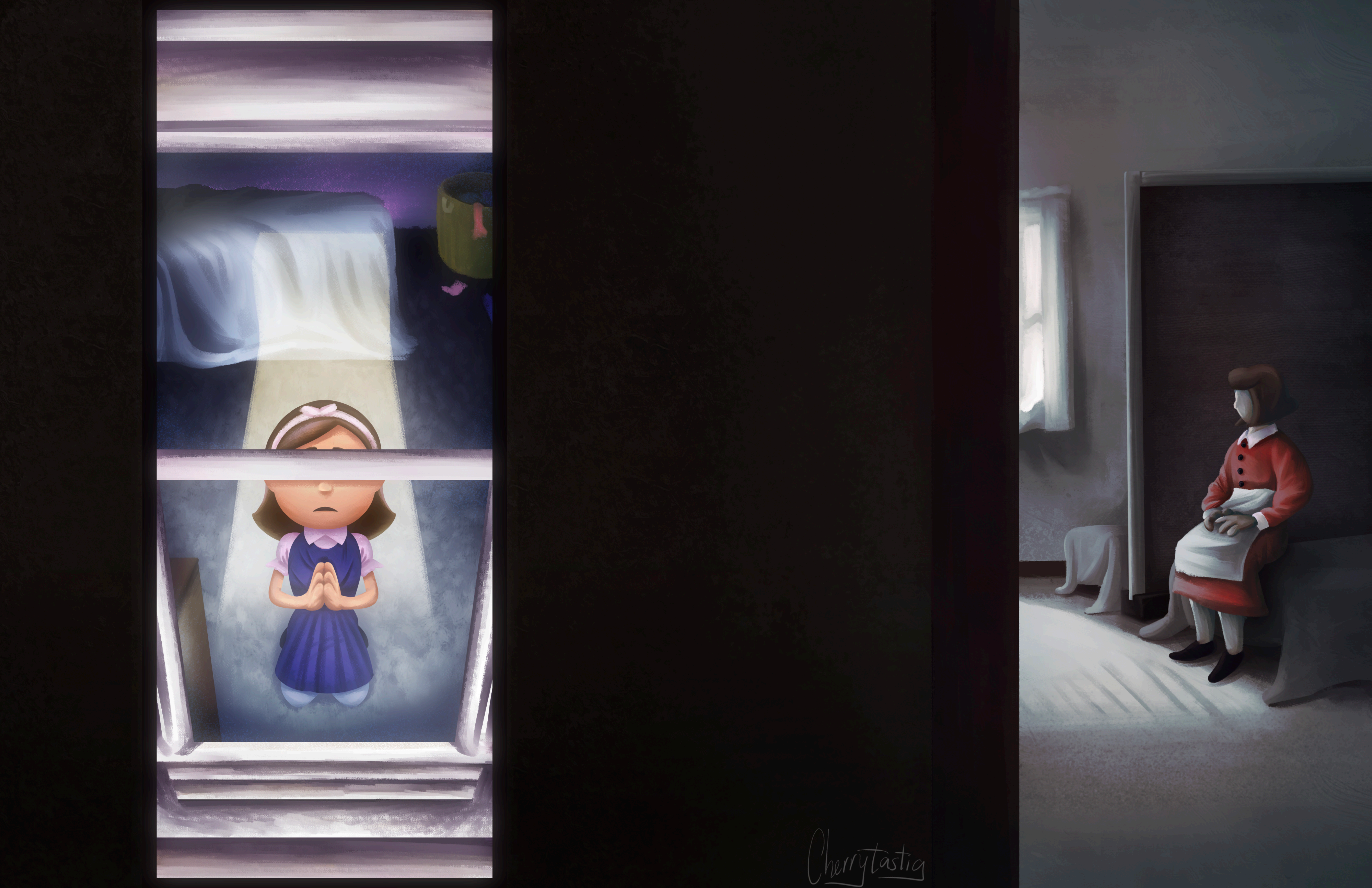
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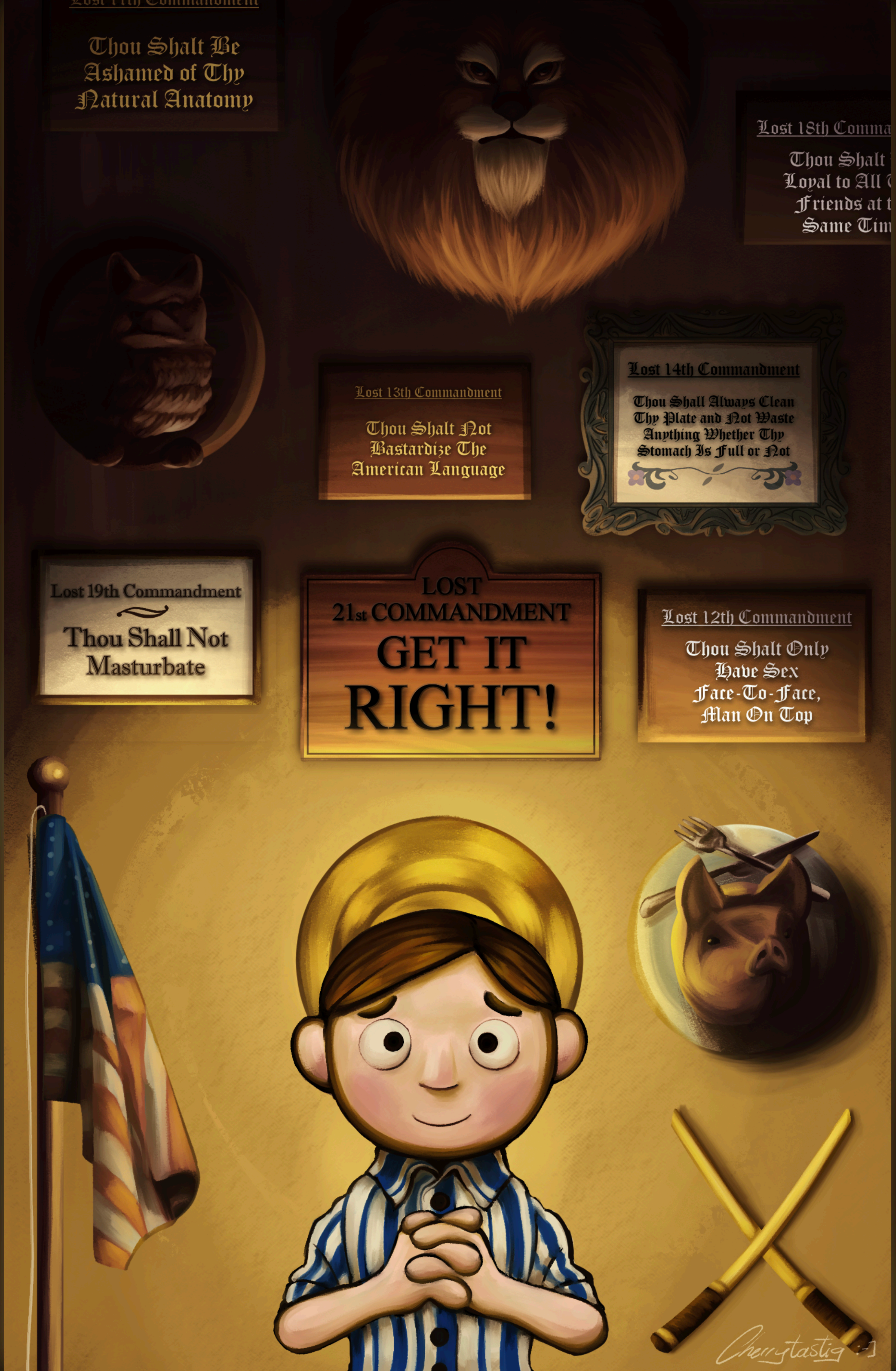
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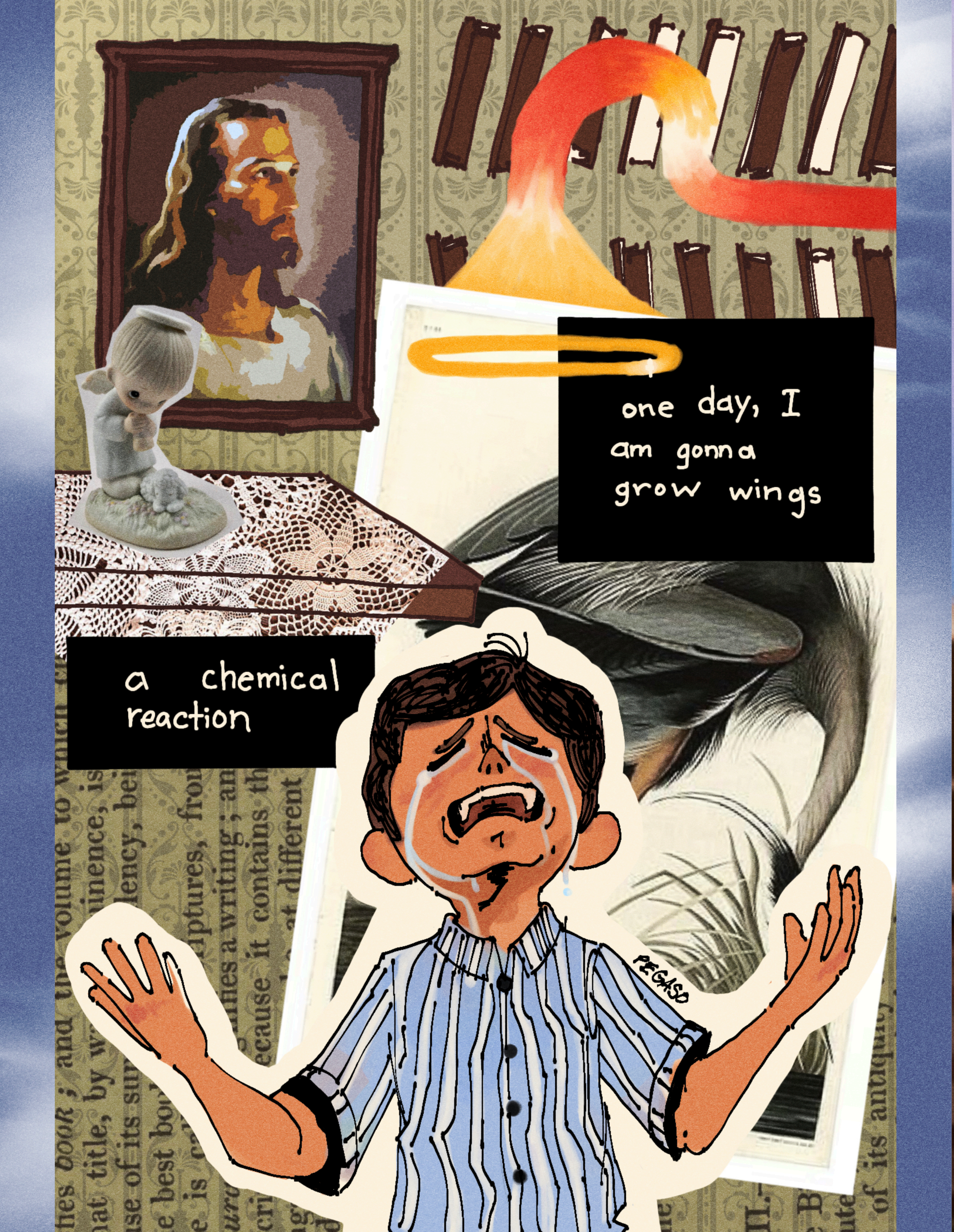
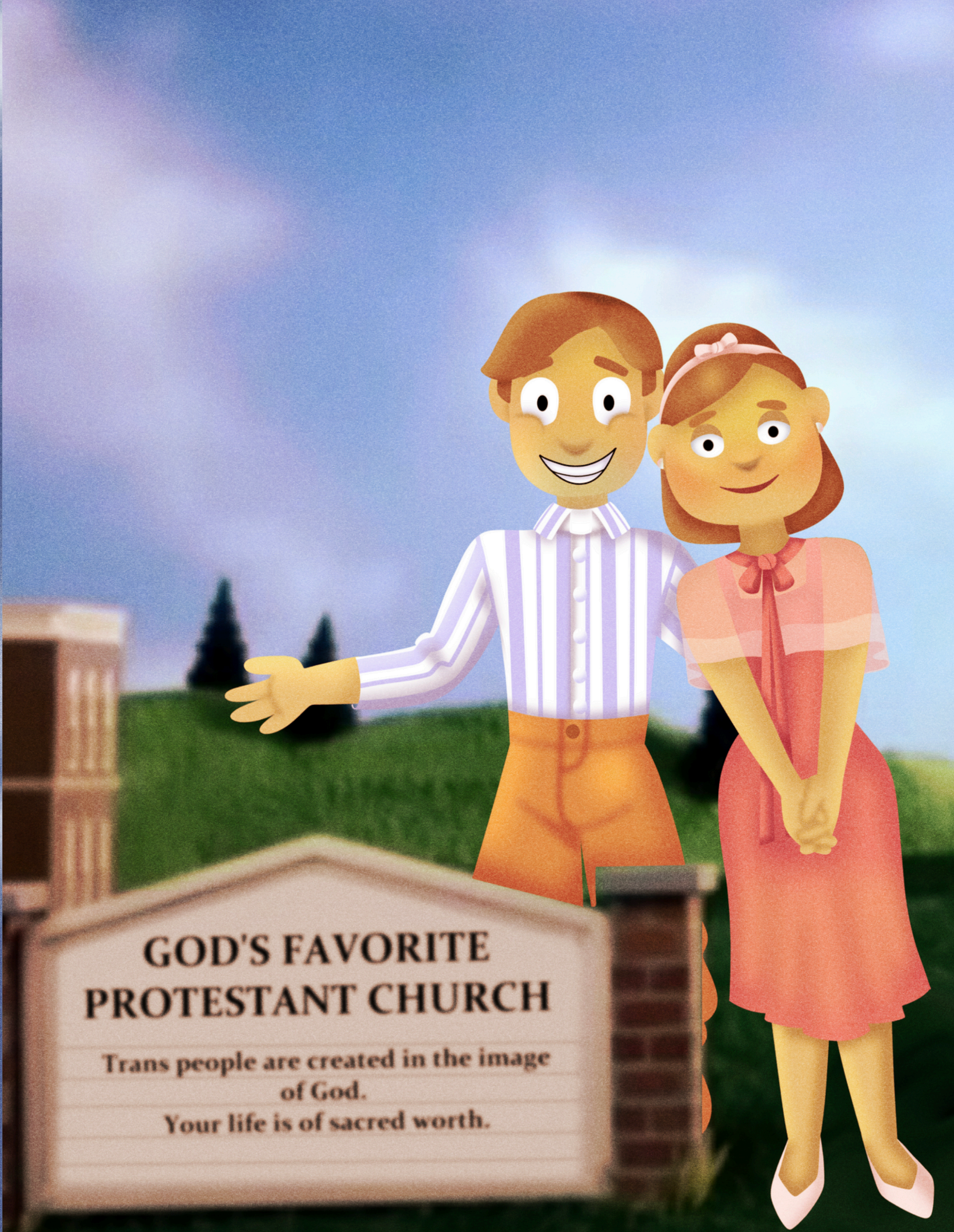
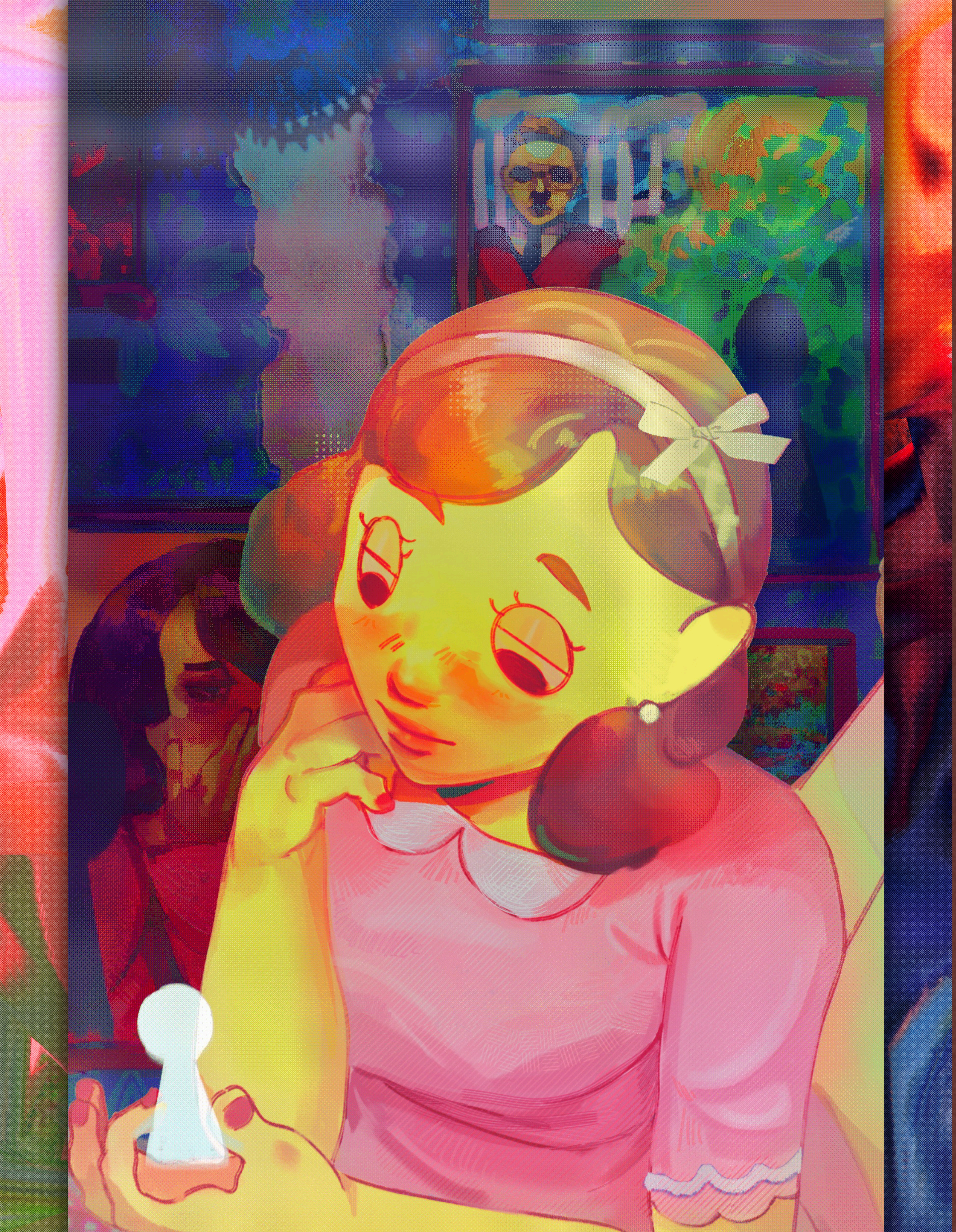
Thou Shalt Be Ashamed of Thy Natural Anatomy
Lost 18th Comma
Thou Shalt
Loyal to All
Friends at t
Same Tim
Lost 13th Commandment
Thou Shalt Not Bastardize The American Language
Lost 14th Commandment
Thou Shall Always Clean Thy Plate and Not Waste Anything Whether Thy Stomach Is Full or Not
Lost 19th Commandment
Thou Shall Not Masturbate
LOST 21st COMMANDMENT
GET IT RIGHT!
Lost 12th Commandment
Thou Shalt Only Have Sex Face-To-Face, Man On Top
Cherrytastiq :-]

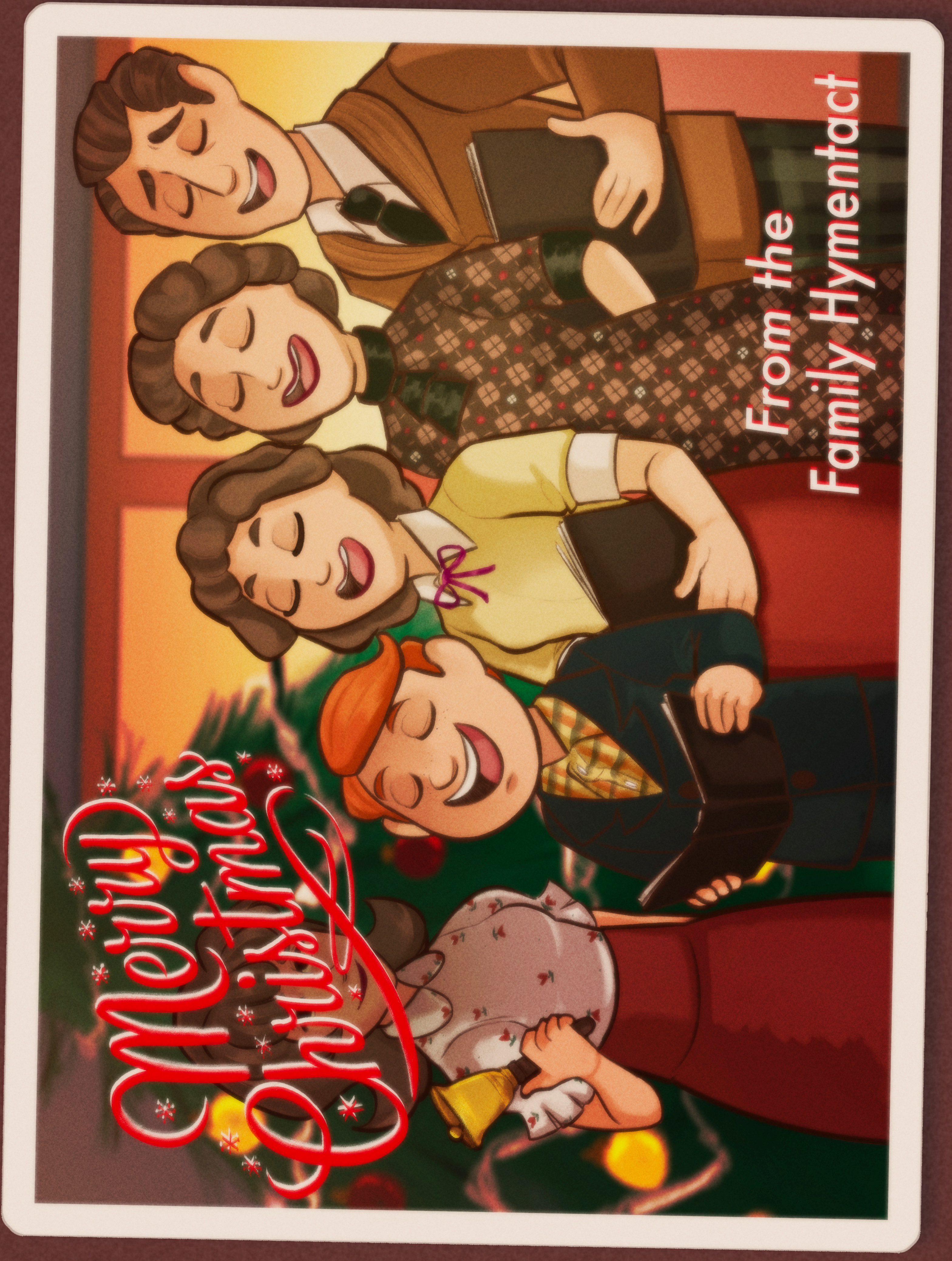

one day, I am gonna grow wings
a chemical reaction
PEGASO

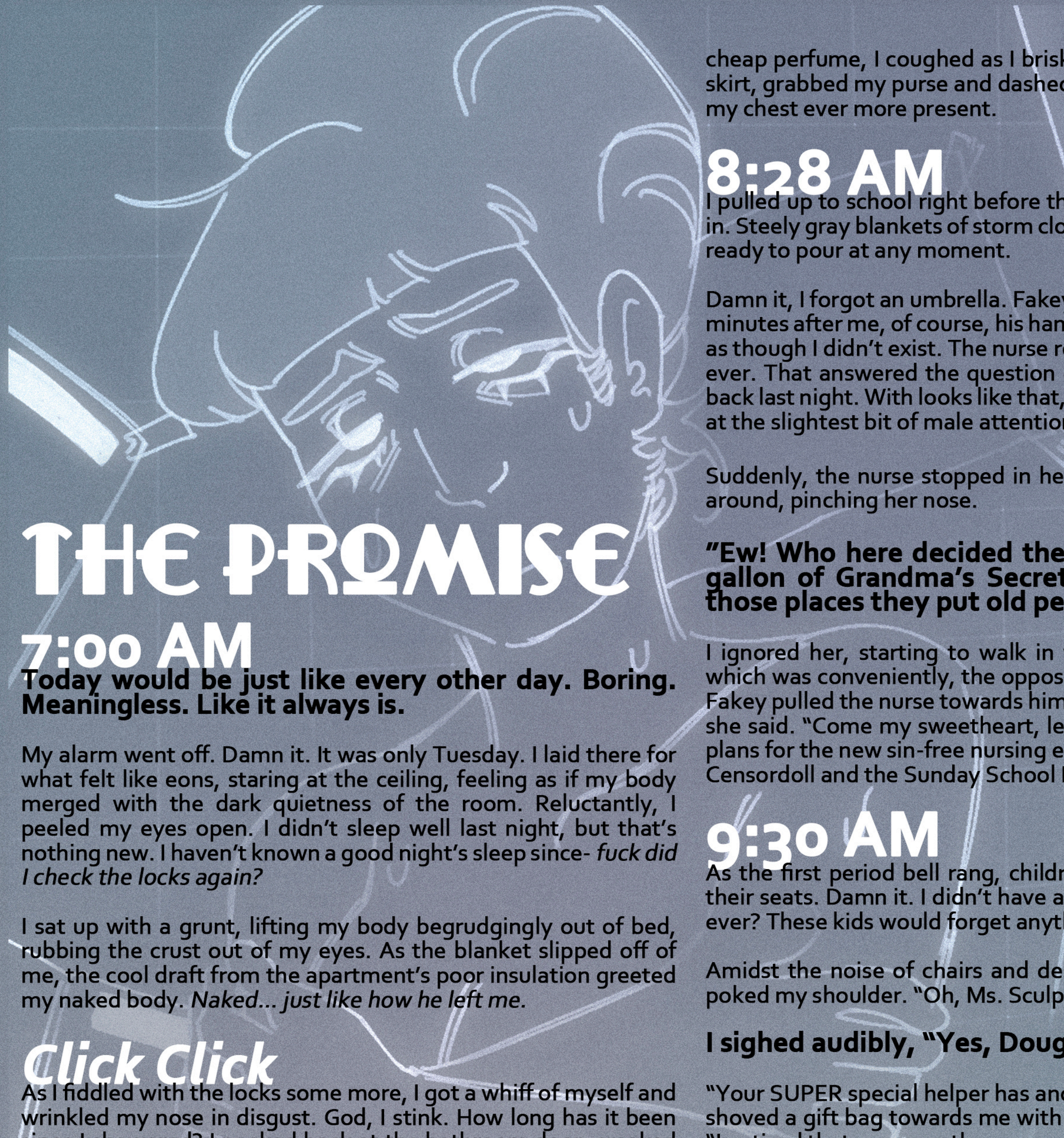

GOD'S FAVORITE PROTESTANT CHURCH
Trans people are created in the image of God.
Your life is of sacred worth.

COSPLAY PARTY

Arabella_Cos
Mommagranate
antyoneelse
Remember, Jesus is cool! - The Revs
gravecircuit
CurvyWireCos
"Why not?"
gravecircuit
SAKURA-CON
Mommagranate
Kyliee
Arabella_Cos
Tophat.Cosplay




Merry Christmas
From the
Family Hymentact



THE PROMISE

7:00 AM

Today would be just like every other day. Boring. Meaningless. Like it always is.

My alarm went off. Damn it. It was only Tuesday. I laid there for what felt like eons, staring at the ceiling, feeling as if my body merged with the dark quietness of the room. Reluctantly, I peeled my eyes open. I didn't sleep well last night, but that's nothing new. I haven't known a good night's sleep since- *fuck did I check the locks again?*

I sat up with a grunt, lifting my body begrudgingly out of bed, rubbing the crust out of my eyes. As the blanket slipped off of me, the cool draft from the apartment's poor insulation greeted my naked body. *Naked... just like how he left me.*

Click Click

As I fiddled with the locks some more, I got a whiff of myself and wrinkled my nose in disgust. God, I stink. How long has it been since I showered? I peeked back at the bathroom door, creaked partially open, as if inviting me in. His eye met mine through the crack. It's as if he was watching me, luring me in so he could do it all again.

Click Click Click Click

I told myself I put up all those newspaper articles, all those photos, to remind myself that I, Agnes Sculptham, was a local hero. That I finally meant something, that I could do something positive for this town. And maybe in some sense, these articles were to remind me that I was desirable and wanted. Even if it was only by him.

Click Click Click Click Click

I could see my reflection in the cracks of the lock, always eerily similar to how it looked when I saw myself in his knife that night. Distorted. My nose and cheeks looked really big. Sometimes there was a certain angle where it looked like there were millions of me, whoever that person was, like the fragments of myself scattered around Moralton.

Agnes Sculptham, legally. Ms. Sculptham, the generally disinterested school teacher. Aggie, the beautiful blonde daughter of Mr and Mrs. Sculptham. The Local Martyr, to the newspaper.

And then there's the dirty whore who was asking for it.

There was no time to ruminate that morning. Dousing myself in cheap perfume, I coughed as I briskly slipped into a sweater and a skirt, grabbed my purse and dashed out of my room; the weight in my chest ever more present.

8:28 AM

I pulled up to school right before the bell rang just in time to clock in. Steely gray blankets of storm clouds covered the sky, seemingly ready to pour at any moment.

Damn it, I forgot an umbrella. Fakey and the nurse strolled in a few minutes after me, of course, his hand groping her as they passed by as though I didn't exist. The nurse rolled her eyes, looking bored as ever. That answered the question of why I never heard her come back last night. With looks like that, of course she was going to give at the slightest bit of male attention.

Suddenly, the nurse stopped in her tracks and whipped her head around, pinching her nose.

"Ew! Who here decided they like, needed to wear a gallon of Grandma's Secret. It smells like... one of those places they put old people times a bajillion."

I ignored her, starting to walk in the direction of my classroom which was conveniently, the opposite of where they were headed. Fakey pulled the nurse towards him, completely disregarding what she said. "Come my sweetheart, let's go make love- I mean make plans for the new sin-free nursing equipment that got approved by Censordoll and the Sunday School Board!"

9:30 AM

As the first period bell rang, children flooded the room and took their seats. Damn it. I didn't have a lesson plan yet. But when did I ever? These kids would forget anything within 30 minutes.

Amidst the noise of chairs and desks scraping the floor, a finger poked my shoulder. "Oh, Ms. Sculptham!"

I sighed audibly, "Yes, Doughy. What is it this time."

"Your SUPER special helper has another gift for you!" He excitedly shoved a gift bag towards me with his chubby hands, and winked. "I noticed that you wear the same sweater every day, so I wanted to get you something new to wear! I think you would look so beautiful in it... like you do with everything."

I rolled my eyes, reached into the bag and pulled out the sweater. My heart skips a beat as I'm greeted with a familiar smell.

"Doughy. Where did you get this?"

"Oh, well..." His hand scratches the back of his head as his voice grows meeker. "You know... I ran out of allowance, and I got really sad because could I find gifts to convince you to go steady with me?"

I visibly winced.

"And so I think... Mr. Creepler..." My eyes widened, shocked. How could he still be connected to this. Was it true? Did he really love me after all? Was I really different, special even, from the other women he had attacked?

Doughy droned on, but I wasn't there anymore. My fingers tightened around the sweater as I imagined myself in it. Taking in the smell, bringing me back to the sensation of his body pressed and rubbing against mine, touching me and feeling me where I had never been touched before.

"Blah blah really likes me blah blah giving me presents... blah blah blah in the back of his van, I want to go into your van." I felt like a cornered animal. Absolutely ridiculous. To feel this way all because of a little kid?

"Doughy, I don't want this sweater." I pushed the gift bag back into his hands. "It smells like an ice cream that was left outside for weeks." It was as if the smell had taken a physical form to phantasmically prod against my privates, then morphing into the feeling of his ragged breathing against my ear. My throat felt like it was on fire. I just wanted to scream and cry in a corner.

"But, Ms. Sculptham, please! I insist!" My eyes darted around the room. There were a few brunettes in the room. He liked brunettes. It was my fault that it happened. I was asking for it. I remembered my mom scolding me about trading my beautiful natural blonde for a drab black. But that's what he liked. I even left my door unlocked that night.

"No, Doughy, I don't want it." I hissed, my voice sharp with disdain. "Until you figure out how to give gifts that don't smell like spoiled milk, then someone else is going to be my special helper today."

"Well if it's only the smell, can't you just wash it?" The putrid horrible smell that would never come out, staining things forever.

My fists slammed on the table. The class fell silent immediately, as I felt 37 pairs of eyes sear into me.

"Doughy, take your lousy sweater back and sit your snotty keister down right now!" I roared. "When I said no, I meant it!"

Doughy froze, tearing up and starting to sniffle.

As if on cue, a knock on the door broke the silence.

"I'm... not interrupting anything am I?"

My fingers pinched the bridge of my nose, and I sighed, unsuccessfully trying to calm myself down. "No, Reverend. Come right on in."

I took another deep breath, unable to make eye contact with the class and instead looking at the tops of their heads.

"Alright, class. You're going to give the Reverend all your attention for your monthly science lesson."

10:20 AM

"So remember class, Satan's influence is everywhere. Now take a look here again." Putty raised a small glass of water with a pencil inside, met with ogling eyes. "Do you remember what makes the pencil warp and look all hideous and wrong and ungodly?"

As per usual, his answer was met with crickets. I snorted, imagining myself in the position of that pencil. Distorted and ugly. Another small fragment of Agnes Sculptham. The one who yells at little kids. I looked over at Doughy who had his head in his arms, like a turtle hiding in its shell.

A small voice in the back piped up. "Satan!"

Putty rolled his eyes and smiled. "Yes, that's right, Orel. Well, now you know all about the Devil's horrible traps, trying to lead you into sinful things like Catholicism, rock music, homosexuality, and other evil sexual desires..." I let out a barely audible sigh, rolling my eyes, sinking even lower into my seat. The Reverend always knew how to remind me about what a horrible human being I was.

The Reverend removed the pencil from the cup, drying it on his shirt and leaving a little wet stain. "But when you have the light of God, he can make things good and holy again!" He took out a small flashlight and shined it on the cup, moving it around to get the angle right.

I wondered when the storms and the floods of my life would end.

A rainbow beamed out of the cup, casting a beautiful arc of colors which elicited a chorus of the oo's and aa's from the class.

"If you kiddos were good listeners at church last Sunday, you'd remember that back in the Old Testament, the world was so horrible and dirty that God flooded nearly everything off of it! Can you imagine how Noah felt when he and the last living beings on Earth were all floating on an ark?"

I remember listening to this story when I was a little girl. I went through the motions of church but, frankly, I stopped believing in the stuff. I couldn't handle the social pressure of being a godless social pariah, especially as a school teacher.

The Reverend's voice softened. "And after the horrible flood and the storms, God showed Noah and his family a rainbow in the sky... And what did that rainbow mean to Noah?"

I gazed at the beam of colors from the cup, letting myself become lost in them. I

6:37 PM

The rest of the day was a blur as I continued to go through the motions. I returned home just in time before it started downpouring outside, following my usual routine of light flickering and door locking, inevitably giving up.

As I removed my clothes, my nose was greeted with the familiar smell of perfume and body odor. My nose wrinkled in disgust. This was getting out of hand.

I turned my head to the bathroom, the door still at the same angle as it was this morning, although this time it was too dark to see him. I took a deep breath and made my way to the shower, each step making the constant weight in my heart double. Finally inside, I turned on the water, shivering and feeling my skin prickle at the temperature.

Closing my eyes, I let the water run over every roll and crevice of my body, feeling its cold stream through my hair, down to my shoulders, over my breasts, my stomach, my thighs, to the floor. The weight in my heart spilled over as I let out one of the ugliest sobs in existence. I was so tired of living this way. His eyes were everywhere in the room. Watching me. Perceiving me. Judging me. It was as if he was in the room with me again. *That's right, you slut. The more you cry, the faster it'll be over.*

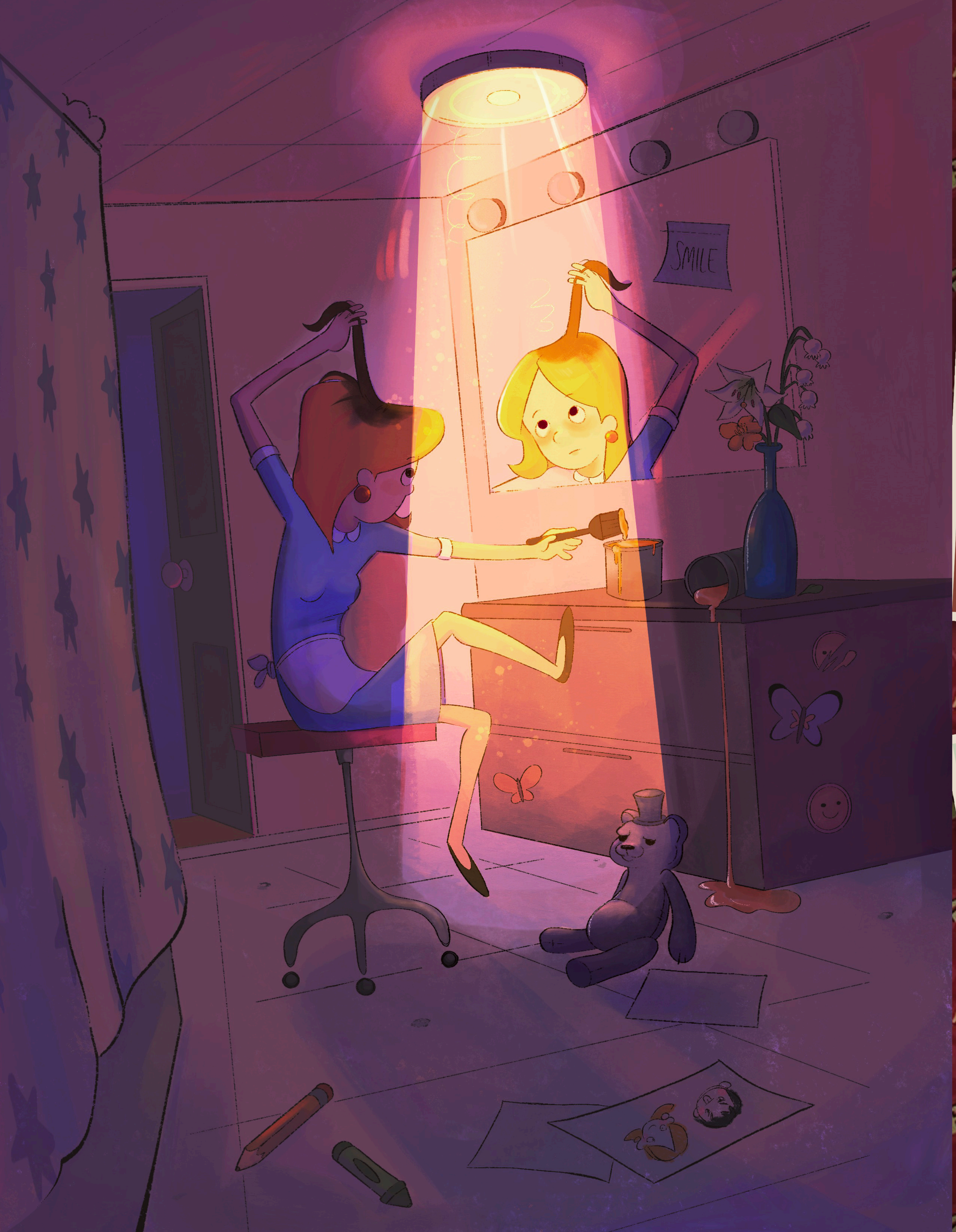
Agnes Sculptham was a collection of different fragments throughout Moralton. And at this moment, I grieved each one of those lost and scattered parts. I grieved the one I had lost that day in this very apartment. I grieved the one who had to make such a difficult decision all by herself with a coat hanger and those pills from Sinville. I shuddered, coughed, and sniffled. I just wanted to be whole again.

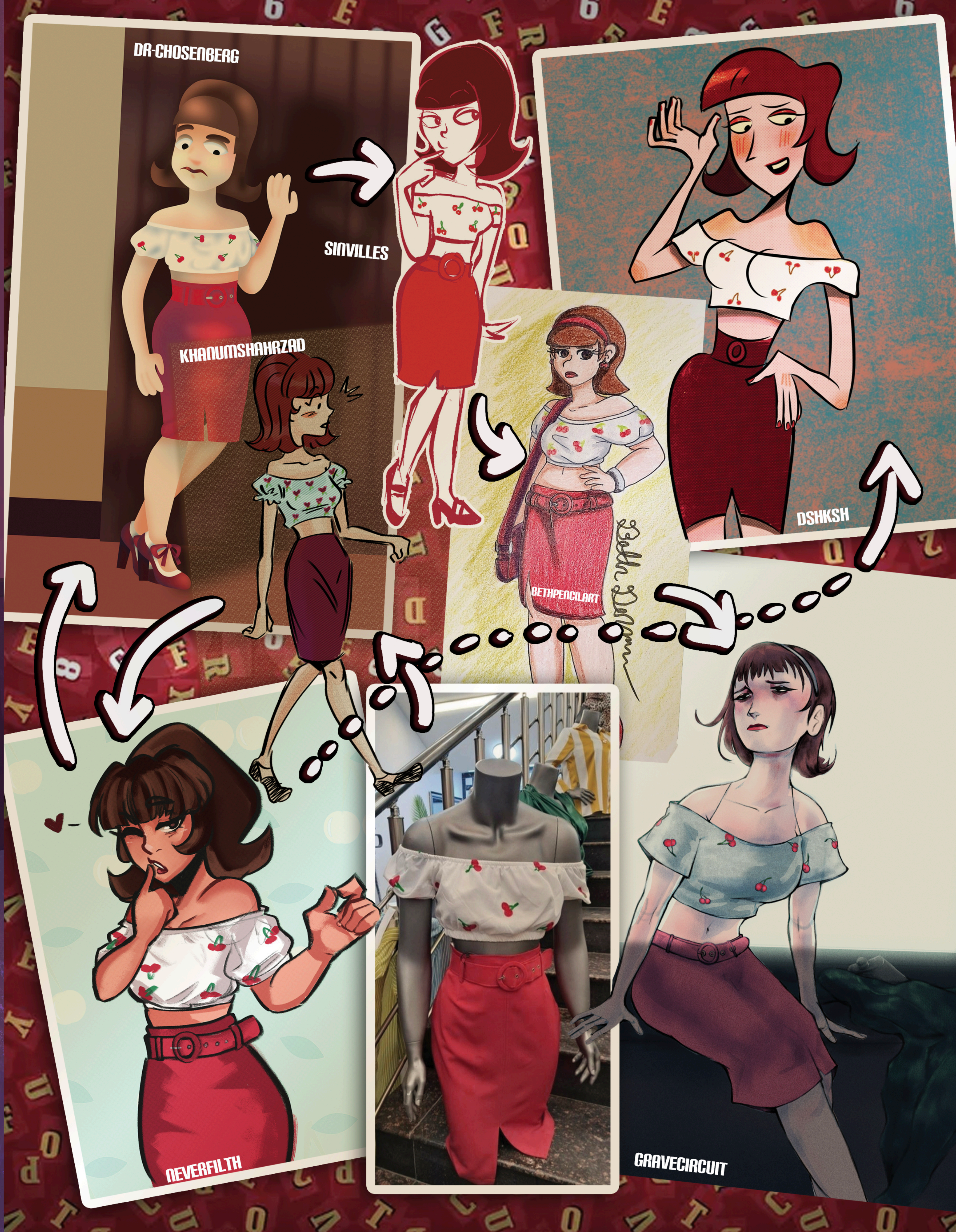
I rubbed my eyes open, unable to differentiate water, snot, and tears. But as my vision cleared, I saw colors. The faintest rainbow glimmered, created from the spray of shower water and bright bathroom light. It was pale and could have very easily been an illusion. But that didn't matter. I didn't dare stir in case I would break the wisp's beam of light.

The lump in my throat grew as I tried to stop myself from crying again. Maybe there was hope. These ugly feelings of grief wouldn't last forever. And maybe one day, there would be a whole Agnes Sculptham, each fragment united into a beautiful ray of colors. My mind wandered back to the Reverend's question in class.

"And what did that rainbow mean to Noah?"

A promise.


SMILE


DR-CHOSENBERG
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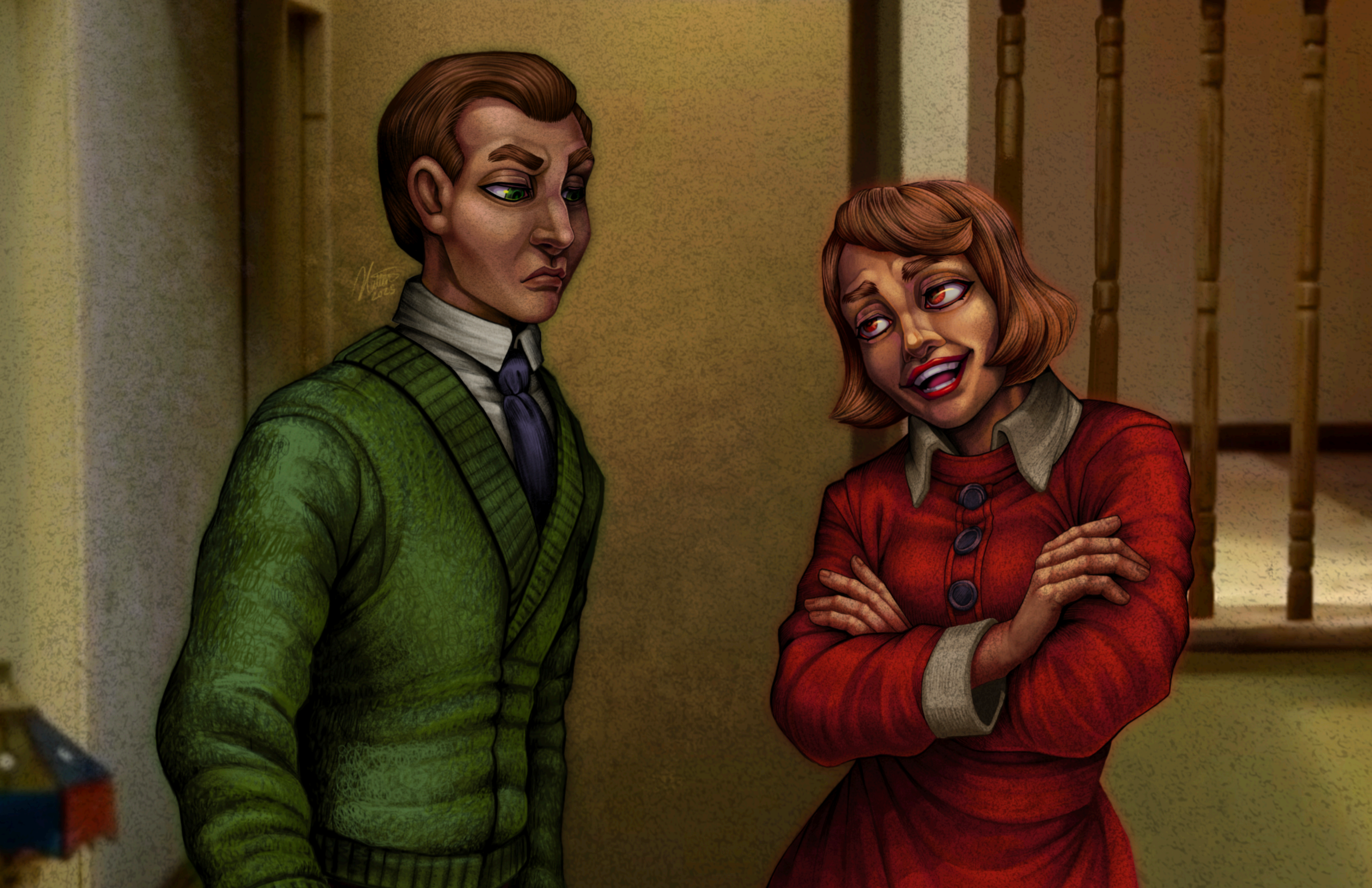


WORDS : LOGAN M. • ART & LAYOUT : JOE IOVINO.

Statesota Executive Order #44

WITH THE WAGON TRAIN HITCHED FOR THE NIGHT, HUCK PUPPINGTON EMERGED FROM HIS FATHER'S WHIPPING TENT WITH TEARSTAINED CHEEKS, AWAKE TO HIS SINFUL WAYS, TO FIND OL' RIP VAN TRILLOKISSEM, THE CAMP DRUNK, WAITING ON A FALLEN LOG BY THE CREEK. LIFTING HIS JUG IN GREETING, RIP GESTURED FOR HIM TO COME JOIN.

"YOUNG HUCKPUPPY." HE SAID. "WOULD I BE MISTAKEN IN THINKING YOU GOT YERSELF A WHOOPIN' ON ACCOUNT OF SOME RELIGIOUS NOTION YOU TOOK A MITE FAR?"

HUCK DANGLED HIS BARE FEET IN THE WATER, KICKING UP SOME MUDDY CHUNKS OF CLAY. "THAT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT."

"IT WEREN'T BECAUSE OF THEM MORMONITES WHAT GOT RAN OUT OF TERRITORYSOTA, WERE IT?"

"IT WERE."

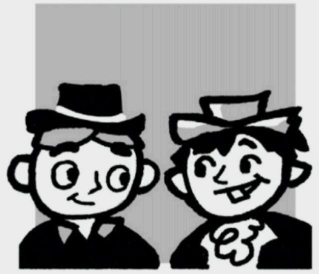
"HELL, SON." RIP TAKES A CARTOONISHLY LONG AND INDULGENT SWIG FROM HIS JUG, MARKED "XXX", THEN WIPES HIS MOUTH ON HIS DISINTEGRATING OVERALLS. "YOU CAN'T EXPECT YOUR PA TO UNDERSTAND THE KIND OF FRIENDSHIP A BOY CAN DEVELOP WITH THE CHILD OF HERETICS. IT AIN'T AN UNDERSTANDING WORLD, SON."

"THEY BELIEVE IN JESUS DON'T THEY?" HUCK IMPLORED. "WHAT'S NOT TO UNDERSTAND?"

"WELL, SON." RIP SAYS, STASHING THE JUG BEHIND HIS LOG AND PRODUCING A MAP OF THE EASTERN HALF OF THE UNITED STATES CIRCA EARLY-MID 19TH CENTURY. "BECAUSE OF A SUDDEN EXPLOSION IN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY WHAT WITH THE BUILDING OF THE ERIE CANAL AND EXPANSION OF INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS WEST OF THE APPALACHIANS AROUND THE EIGHTEEN AND TWENTIES, LOTS OF FOLKS STARTED WHAT YE MIGHT CALL SOCIETIES OF RELIGIOUS NONCONFORMISTS, TAKEN WITH THE SUPERNATURAL AND ROMANTIC ELEMENTS OF THE REG'LAR PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS BUT WITH VERY LITTLE INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT SEEING AS IT'S THE FRONTIER AND ALL."

WHILE RIP WAS EXPLAINING ALL THIS, HUCK REMEMBERED THE MORMONITE BOY HE'D BEFRIENDED JUST A WEEK EARLIER. RUN OUT OF TOWN WITH HIS FAMILY NOW, POOR AMOS– THEY'D SPENT A WONDERFUL FEW DAYS FISHING, PLAYING HOOP-&-STICK, KNUCKLEBONES, AND TALKING ABOUT WHAT THEY'D HOPED FOR THEIR FAMILIES' FUTURES BEFORE SCANDAL AROSE AND MORALTON'S POWERS-THAT-BE PETITIONED THE GOVERNOR TO AUTHORIZE A MASSACRE. SOME OF THE MORMONITE FARMHOUSES IN WEST MORALTON WERE STILL SMOLDERING, AWAITING FORECLOSURE AND AUCTION.

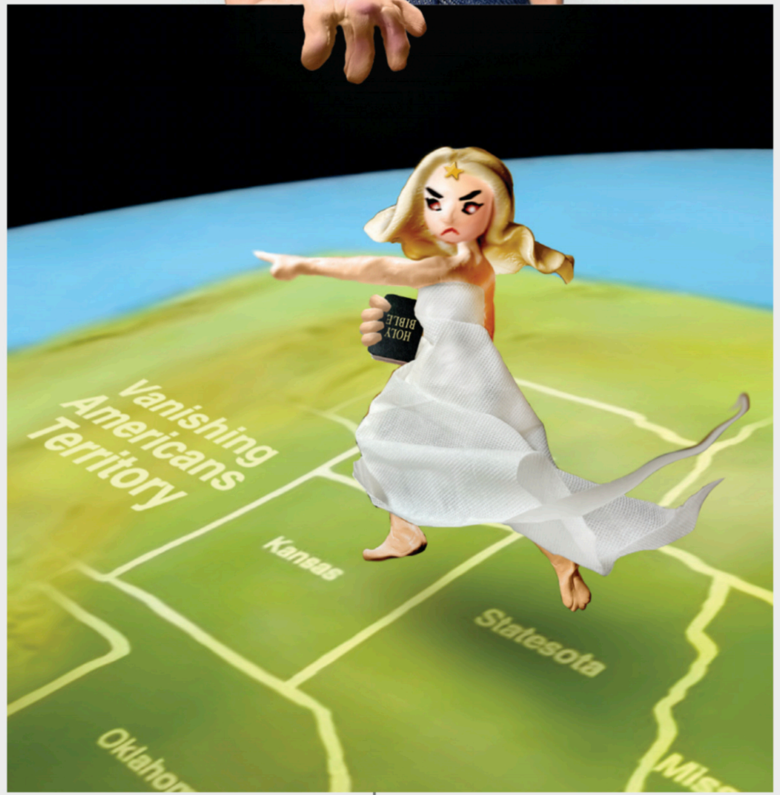
"WHAT'S SO DIFFERENT BETWEEN US & THEM?" HUCK ASKED. "HONEST."



"THOU SHALT GET THE HELL OUTTA TERRITORYSOTA, YE HEATHEN MORMONS!!!" – GOV. LENSCAPPE

"YOU WANT GOD'S TRUTH, SON? THEY'RE A BUNCH OF BIGAMIST, APOSTATE, TEETOTALING, SELF-SERVING ABSOLUTE WACKADOOS WHO BELIEVE THAT EVERY MAN INHERITS A PLANET UPON HIS DEATH AND THAT THE SASQUATCH BEARS THE MARK OF CAIN."

"SHOOT." SAID HUCK. "GOD'S TRUTH." SAID RIP, WHOSE JUG HAD RE-MATERIALIZED IN HIS HANDS BETWEEN CUTS.



"ONE OTHER THING." SAID HUCK, A LITTLE MORE NERVOUS NOW BECAUSE HE KNOWS THIS IS A THOUGHT LIKELY BEST LEFT UNSPOKEN– "AREN'T WE JUST LOOKING FOR THE SAME THING?"

"HOW'S THAT?"

HUCK SHRUGGED. "AIN'T HEAVEN JUST REAL ESTATE? THE POPE WORSHIPPERS SAY SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT OF IT BEING A WAITING ROOM WHILE GOD GETS THE NEW EARTH IN SHAPE FOR JUDGEMENT DAY, AND I'VE HEARD SOMEWHERE AND SOMEWHERE ELSE THAT IT'S MORE OR LESS A KIND OF SPIRITUAL CONDITION–"

"AND YOU'RE SAYING THAT WHAT THE LORD HAS IN STORE FOR US MAY AS WELL BE A PLANET?"

HUCK– "WELL… SURE. WHY NOT? ISN'T THAT WHY WE'RE OUT HERE? TO STAKE A CLAIM? AND WHILE WE'RE ALL FOCUSED ON EARTH WHO'S WRITING THE TITLES FOR A FEW ACRES OF HEAVEN?"

RIP TOOK A LONG LONG LONG LONG LOOONNNGGG SWIG FROM HIS JUG THEN. AFTER A MOMENT, HE WIPED HIS MOUTH– "KNOWING THE FOLKS IN THIS CAMP, I'D BEST LEAVE THAT NOTION UNSPOKEN. YOU WOULDN'T WANNA UPSET YER PA AGAIN."

HUCK NODDED, AND BEGAN TO GET UP.

"HEADING OFF SO SOON?" RIP ASKED.

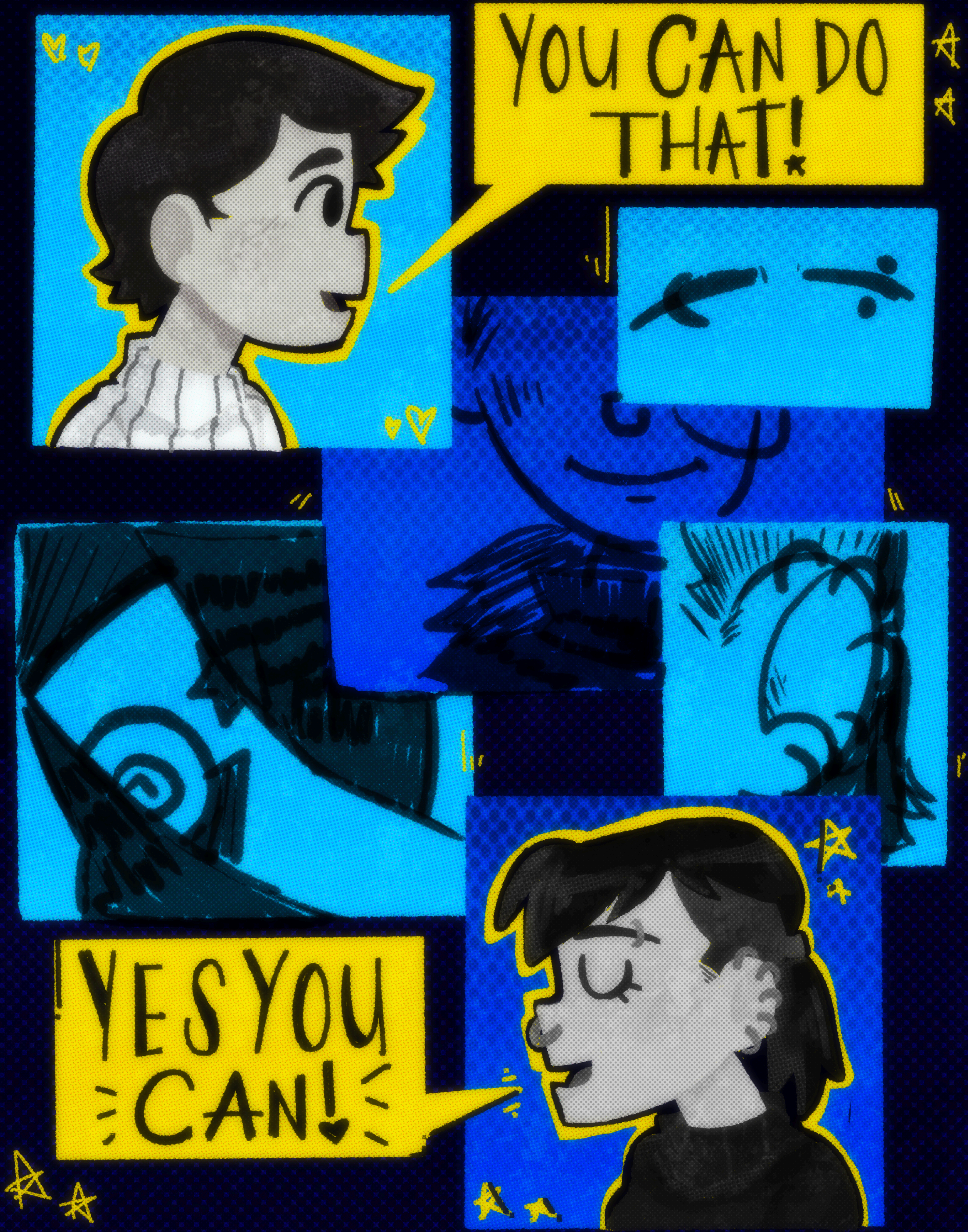
"ONE OF PASTOR PUTTY'S HEIFERS IS CALVING TONIGHT OR TOMORROW. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE WATCHING HER AND TO HOLLER WHEN IT SEEMS ABOUT TIME."

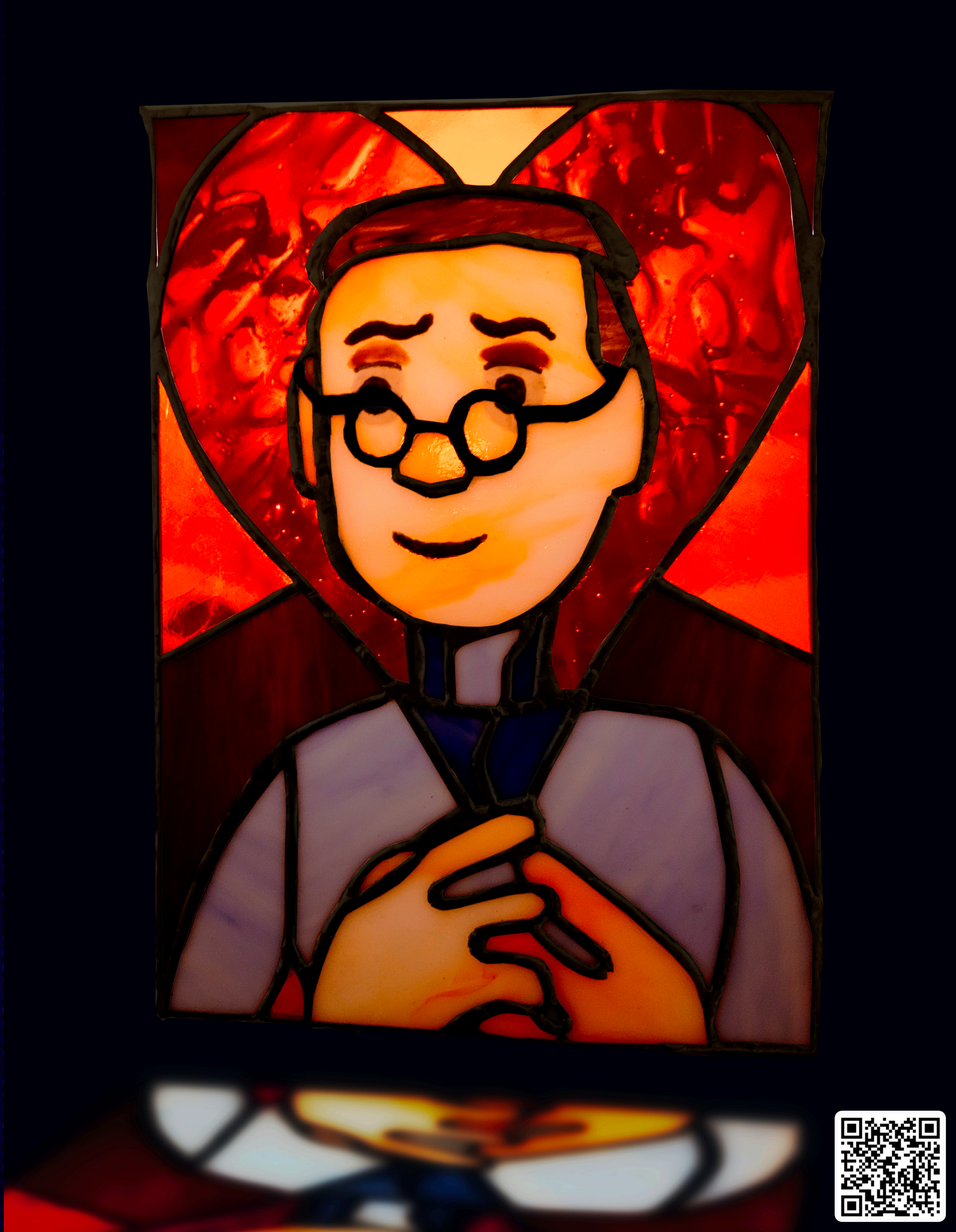
RIP SHOOED HIM WITH HIS HAND– "TELL CORNELIUS I AIN'T FORGOT ABOUT THE SERMON HE GAVE ON TEMPERANCE THE ONE DAMN SUNDAY I SHOW UP TO HIS GOD-FORSAKEN REVIVAL."

"I THINK HE KNOWS."

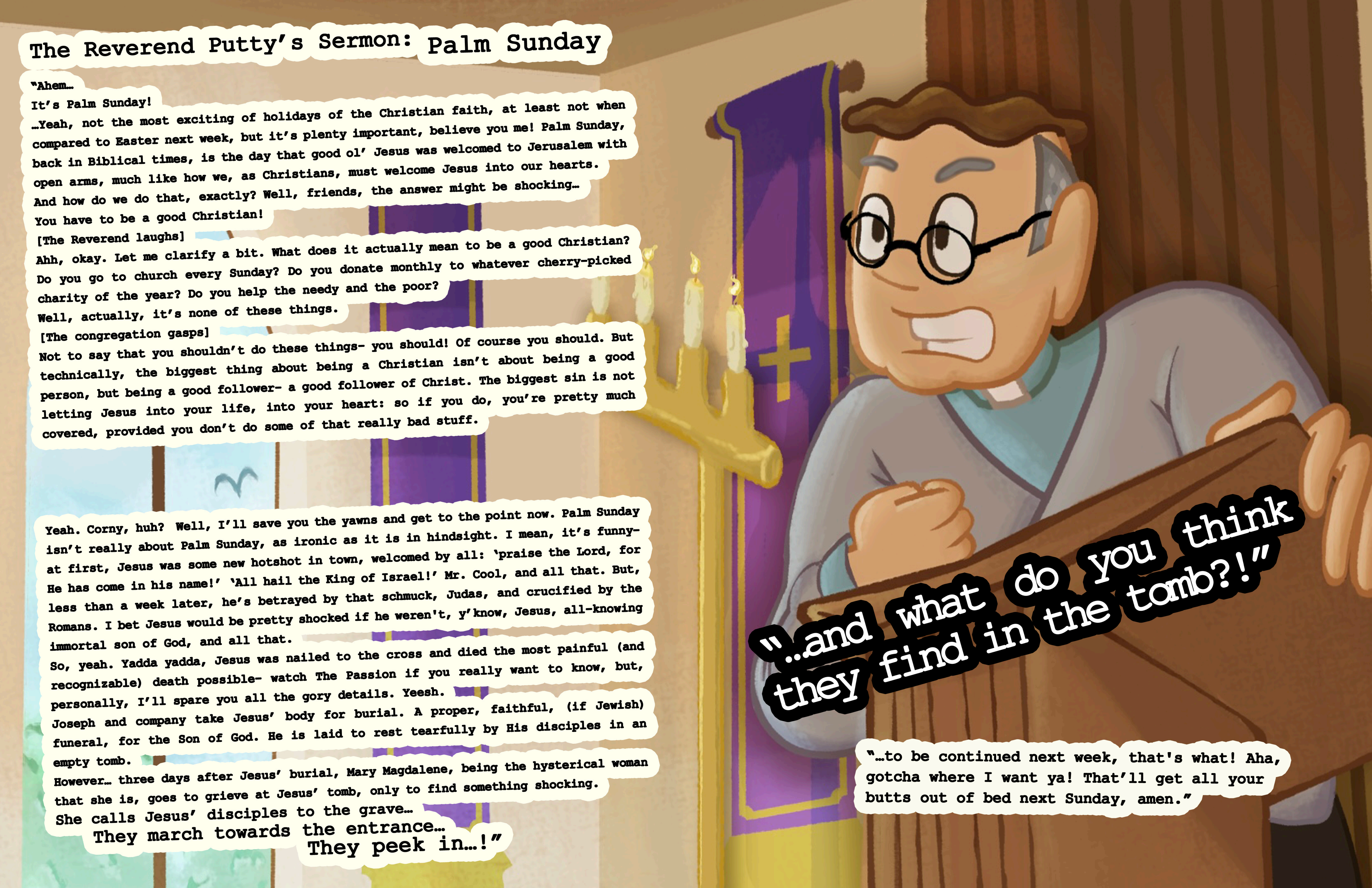
"ALL THE SAME."

RIP SALUTED HIM AND HUCK DID LIKEWISE BEFORE SCAMPERING OFF BACK TOWARDS THE WAGON TRAIN, PASSING BY THE CHARRED REMAINS OF A MORMONITE-OWNED DRY GOODS SHOP AS HE RAN. THE SUN WAS SET FULLY OVER MORALTON THEN AND HUCK'S PA, MA, BROTHER FORMY, UNCLE PUNCH, OL' WIDOW MCMANIKIN, COUSINS MARY & ANETTE, AND PASTOR PUTTY WERE PROBABLY ALL WONDERING WHERE HE WAS.


YOU CAN DO THAT!
YES YOU CAN!



The Reverend Putty's Sermon: Palm Sunday



“Ahem…

It's Palm Sunday!

…Yeah, not the most exciting of holidays of the Christian faith, at least not when compared to Easter next week, but it's plenty important, believe you me! Palm Sunday, back in Biblical times, is the day that good ol' Jesus was welcomed to Jerusalem with open arms, much like how we, as Christians, must welcome Jesus into our hearts.

And how do we do that, exactly? Well, friends, the answer might be shocking…

You have to be a good Christian!

[The Reverend laughs]

Ahh, okay. Let me clarify a bit. What does it actually mean to be a good Christian? Do you go to church every Sunday? Do you donate monthly to whatever cherry-picked charity of the year? Do you help the needy and the poor?

Well, actually, it's none of these things.

[The congregation gasps]

Not to say that you shouldn't do these things- you should! Of course you should. But technically, the biggest thing about being a Christian isn't about being a good person, but being a good follower- a good follower of Christ. The biggest sin is not letting Jesus into your life, into your heart: so if you do, you're pretty much covered, provided you don't do some of that really bad stuff.

Yeah. Corny, huh? Well, I'll save you the yawns and get to the point now. Palm Sunday isn't really about Palm Sunday, as ironic as it is in hindsight. I mean, it's funny- at first, Jesus was some new hotshot in town, welcomed by all: ‘praise the Lord, for He has come in his name!’ ‘All hail the King of Israel!’ Mr. Cool, and all that. But, less than a week later, he's betrayed by that schmuck, Judas, and crucified by the Romans. I bet Jesus would be pretty shocked if he weren't, y'know, Jesus, all-knowing immortal son of God, and all that.

So, yeah. Yadda yadda, Jesus was nailed to the cross and died the most painful (and recognizable) death possible- watch The Passion if you really want to know, but, personally, I'll spare you all the gory details. Yeesh.

Joseph and company take Jesus' body for burial. A proper, faithful, (if Jewish) funeral, for the Son of God. He is laid to rest tearfully by His disciples in an empty tomb.

However… three days after Jesus' burial, Mary Magdalene, being the hysterical woman that she is, goes to grieve at Jesus' tomb, only to find something shocking.

She calls Jesus' disciples to the grave…

They march towards the entrance…

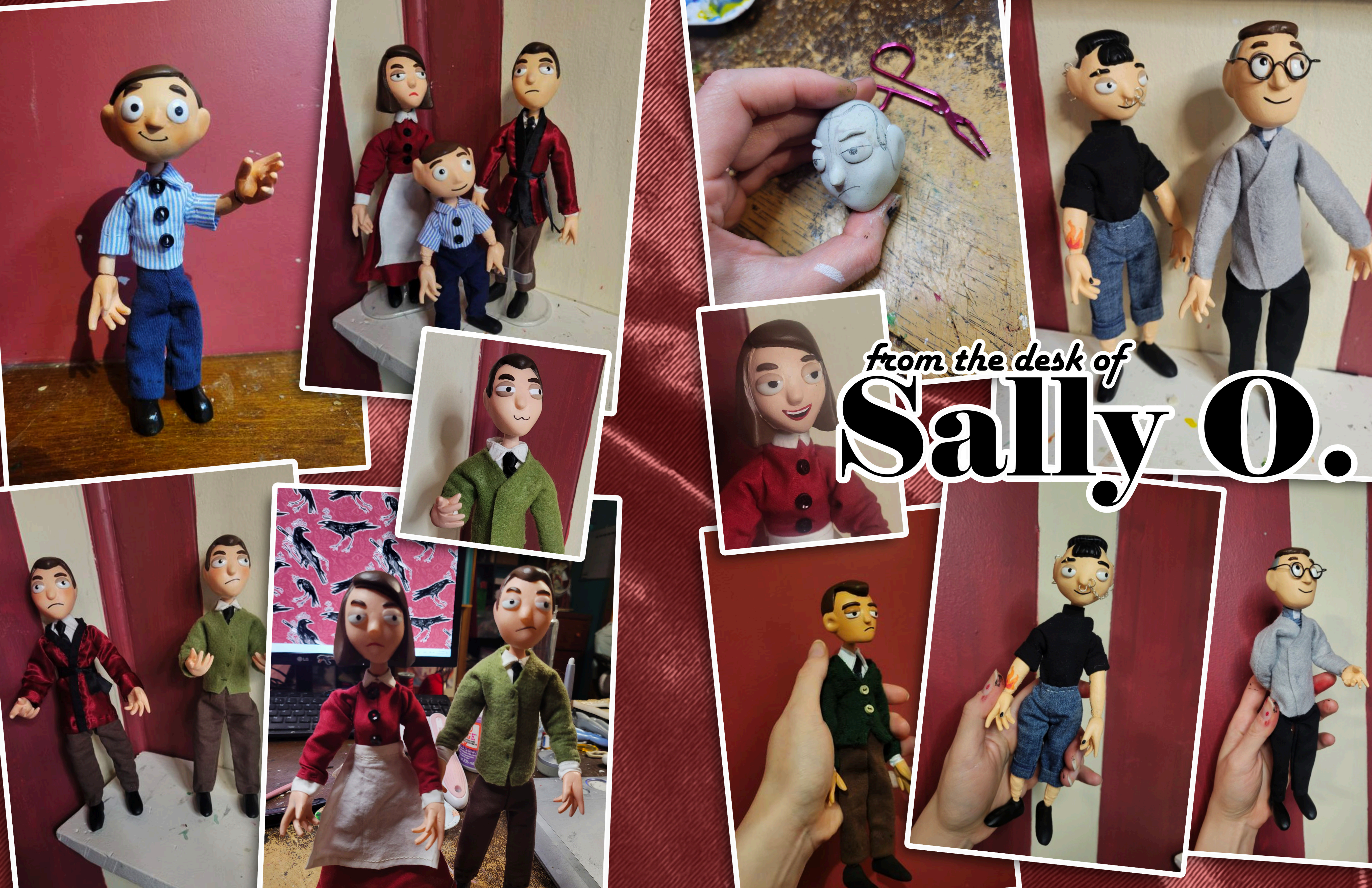
They peek in…!”

“…and what do you think they find in the tomb?!”

“…to be continued next week, that's what! Aha, gotcha where I want ya! That'll get all your butts out of bed next Sunday, amen.”

REFLECTION

mirror • rumination • study • likeness • ersatz • echo • counterpart

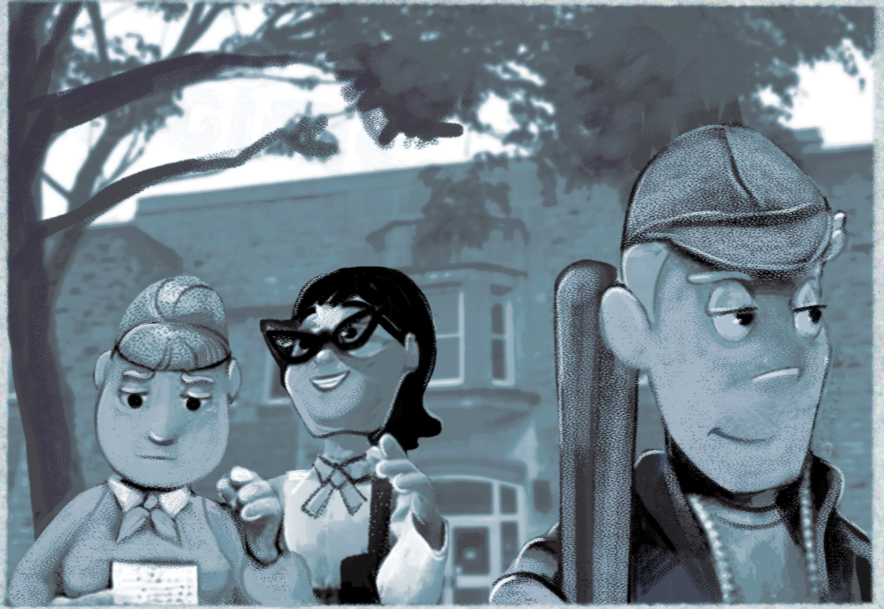


from the desk of

Sally O.

Moralton University Bulletin

ANIMA IN CAELIS, CAPUT IN TERRA



MORALTON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL HYMN

Oh Moralton, no mortal sin
Will pass these walls or climb this ivy
As long as God will be alive, He
Shoots all sinners with a gun

That's registered here by His son
Who came to earth to purchase it
So we can learn a little bit
(Not too much)

CAFETERIA ANNOUNCEMENT:
Meatloaf Monday postponed to Wednesday. Waffle Wednesday postponed to Friday.

Monthly Addendum To the School Dress Code of Conduct

- Ladies are not to bend over in public to pick up any fallen supplies. The Lord punished the devil to crawl on his belly all his life, we ought not to emulate him! Pretty girls, wait for a male student to assist you.
Ugly girls, go to the campus bookstore.
- Ladies are not to leave their dorm rooms with wet hair, lest you tempt the boys. Rain is God's Choice, Sinning is yours!
- We've noticed a darling trend around campus of women dyeing the tips of their hair, calling it "frosting." It shall be a cold day in hell when such ladies feel the warmth of the Lord!

Campus Activity Board

Super-Christians on Campus
Mondays at 6pm

Young Republicans
Tuesdays at 5pm

God's Glory and Guns
Fridays at 4pm

Bowdler's Angels: Library Volunteer Group
Saturdays at 2pm

Sleepy Sabbath Nap Club
Sundays at 3pm

Chastity Ball Friday Night

Glee Club Weekly Stoning moved to TONIGHT!

Three-Legged Race

During your times of trial, when you see only three sets of footprints, it is then that the Moralton University Track team holds their three legged race. The annual John the Apostle Three-Legged Race will be held on the football field this Saturday. Come join us for a day of spirited competition, male camaraderie, and lifelong memories.

Upcoming Annual Chastity Ball

Hopeful young ladies are ready to put their MRS degrees to use as the yearly Chastity Ball draws closer. Located in the Church basement in the center of campus like all other events. Dress code is Sunday Best.

Physics Seminar

Playing Catch With God: An Overview of Intelligent Design
Wednesday at 3pm, Church Basement

In this edition of the school bulletin you can read an essay from the President of the Young Republicans— In Defense of Homeschooling: The Meek Shall Inherit The Earth - Pg. 3

[lauren]

A friend of mine once observed that all of my favorite media are about dysfunctional families, and they weren't wrong. Succession, Fruits Basket, Fun Home, and The Haunting of Hill House – the TV show, although the book is great too – are among my favorite things, so it only made sense that Moral Orel would bury itself deep into my psyche. Religion was never a part of my upbringing, but dysfunction certainly was. My childhood was marked by my father's alcoholism, my parents' constant screaming matches, an endless oscillation between closeness and bitterness within my mother's side of the family, and a pervasive sense of instability that eventually manifested into five diagnosed mental illnesses and a couple chronic physical conditions. I know this is depressing, but I am healing and have lots of good things in my life. In fact, it's things like Moral Orel that have helped me find strength, hope, and community over the years. **Watching Orel's struggles is relatable and cathartic.** Some people like that Orel's story is tied into a neat bow at the end of "Honor," but I prefer to think that it took years of hurt and hardship for him to reach the other side of his trauma. Moral Orel is a show where puppets reflect what it is to be human, and it isn't pretty. I believe Orel can make it through, and I believe Clay, Bloberta, Shapey, and all the rest can make it too. If they can do it, why can't I?

[wes]

Because of Moral Orel I know a lot more about Christianity than I ever expected to. This is because I was raised on some other stringent, heretical Abrahamic creed, but I won't get into that. Ultimately all the lessons are the same. I had a very hard time, first deconstructing that upbringing in my early 20s, and now I'm in the process of trying to forgive what I've been through with it. Moral Orel is the first work of media that has ever offered to help me through that process. It's a show you need to sit with and come back to in order to really appreciate what it has to say. And once you do, and you're aware of the full scope of what they axed when they cancelled it– well it's nothing short of maddening. As if I needed a reminder of how little media conglomerates give a shit about art, and me with a terminal degree in it. On another note, **I used to hate podcasts.** I couldn't see the point of listening in on someone else's conversation and I'm bad at focusing on long stretches of audio. Actually doing one of these made me realize that I'm very grateful to have an existing record of just talking with my friends about something we love. We don't appreciate these things enough. AI can fuck your job prospects, but it can't love a good story.

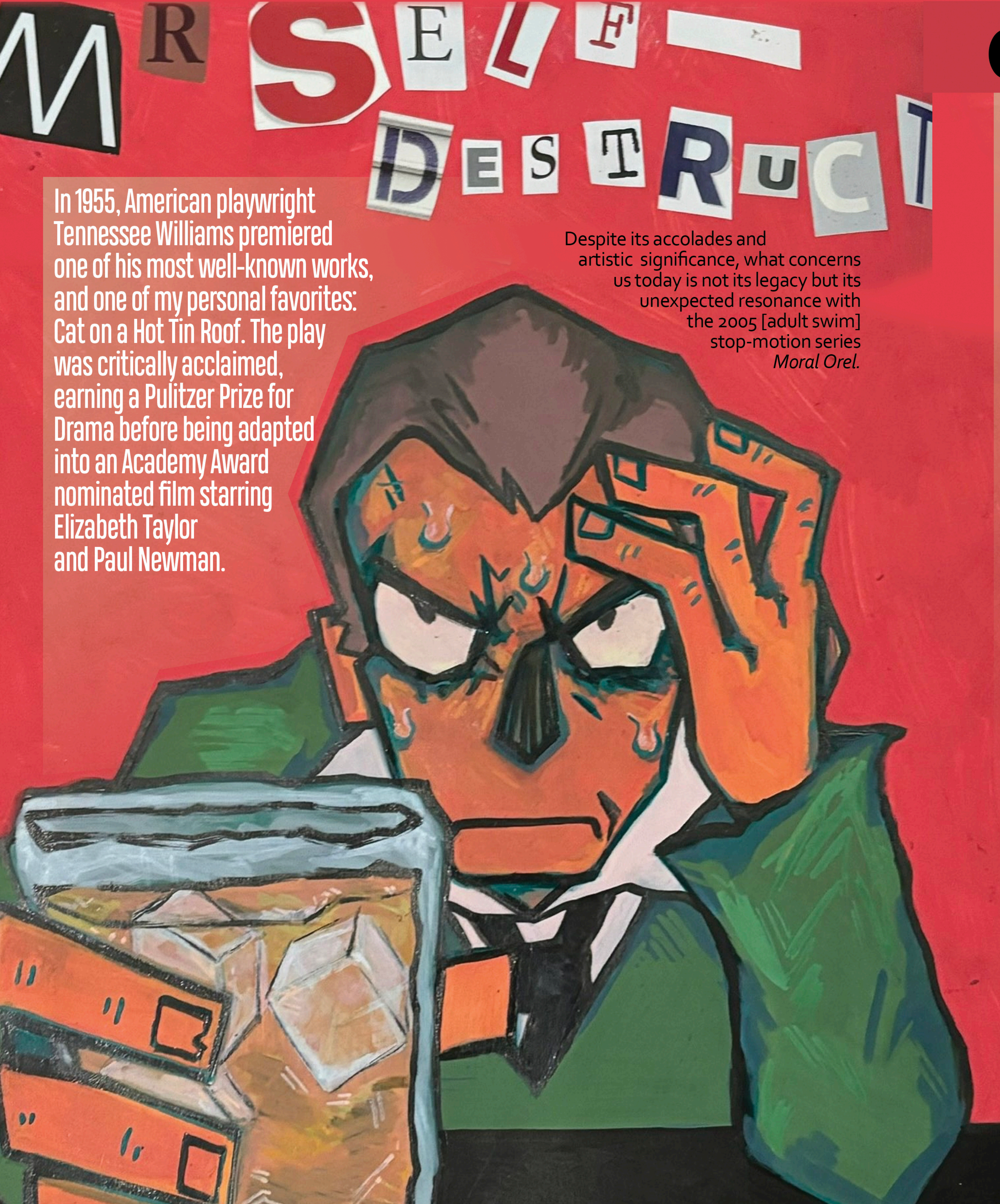
[glam]

Some time ago, in the Moralton University staff room, the Professors and I were joking around about what we would choose if we had a "class speciality." I realized that the only subject I could enjoy a tenure in is…Miscellaneous. **I'm known on the channel for chasing butterflies in to the field of obscurity**, you could say. It's been said by Dino that as the show went on he wanted to change the title to "Moralton," to represent the broadening of the shows focus. I strive for my analysis to carry that torch. Anyone who knows me, knows that I find the most potential within the walls of St Martin Luther's Protestant Hospital, but I believe that almost every character has breadcrumbs that can we can follow! As an MO fan who is still practicing a religion (Judaism) I am of the opinion that it is the most well done example of religious deconstruction and satire in recent memory. Moral Orel is decades ahead of the curve in almost every social issue it touches on, which is why I feel my faith and love for underrated characters are intertwined. The show teaches those who wish to analyze it a very important lesson: To truly understand a person or a character, you must respect their past and their present.

[sena]

Though the presence of God was prevalent on some sides of my family, it was never something I was forced to follow. My brain is kind of funny. I can't always choose where it leans. Instead, I pigeonhole my focus into one thing that really captures me. Jumping from fandom to fandom as time passes. I'm a bit corny; I get really attached to certain characters. Feel a need to break someone down bit by bit and understand every piece of them. When I first discovered Moral Orel, I was floored to learn it had a connection to another obscure thing I loved growing up. A little forgotten 80s show I used to watch way back when. Now, I'm super sappy, and I thought that was fate or something. Two canceled underrated shows? Clearly, that was the universe telling me something. I stewed on it for a while, and didn't join the fandom till a good bit of time passed. **It really did change my life for the better.** I've stepped out of my comfort zone, made lasting friendships, and explored creative avenues I never thought I could. All because of some deep fascination with a sad little puppet woman. I know I've got some weirdly specific interests but at the end of the day, I'm hoping I can help people see these characters the way I do. But more than anything, I'm grateful for the friendships I've made here, I feel like I finally have a place I belong.

CAT ON A CLAY BRICK ROOF



In 1955, American playwright Tennessee Williams premiered one of his most well-known works, and one of my personal favorites: Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. The play was critically acclaimed, earning a Pulitzer Prize for Drama before being adapted into an Academy Award nominated film starring Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman.

Despite its accolades and artistic significance, what concerns us today is not its legacy but its unexpected resonance with the 2005 [adult swim] stop-motion series *Moral Orel.*

At first glance, these two works could not seem more different: one a Southern Gothic stage drama, the other an animated parody of Christian suburbia. Yet beneath their stylistic and cultural differences lies a shared disturbed archetype, so complex and fascinating that it has compelled millions around the world. We're talking about Brick Pollitt and Clay Puppington, the homosexually repressed, deeply disturbed, crippling alcoholic American sweethearts we'll be paralleling today.

Despite them sharing a surprising amount of similarities through their adulthood, their upbringings were vastly different. Both were brought up in an all American household with strong patriarchs, but with some key differences. Brick has a plantation owning father, a quiet housewife mother and a law-abiding citizen brother, all very Christian, very heteronormative and very white. Clay's family differs in a strange way. Although it's implied that his family was well off, it wasn't nearly as wealthy as the Pollitts' empire of racial oppression. Clay's mother had a plethora of miscarriages that affected her relationship with her husband Arthur and made her pamper Clay as a result. Clay unintentionally causes his mother to have a heart attack, which results in emotional neglect from his father and a reliance on physical abuse as a sign of love. Big Daddy, Brick's father, openly favors him — the only family member he can tolerate. Though Brick is a profound disappointment, Big Daddy continues to project onto him the fantasy of a perfect masculine heir: a handsome, athletic, ruthless businessman, with a picture-perfect family. It is clear to other members of the family that this couldn't be further from the truth, but Big Daddy chooses denial over confrontation.

There is a point of no return on both men's lives. Both involve a departure from a fantasy, the involvement of a woman they feel no desire towards and lingering homosexuality. Through the years, Clay kept a low profile, living a quiet life as a bible-reading, apple juice drinking young man. Brick was a profoundly talented athlete with a great future ahead of him, seeming to succeed effortlessly in life. Things get twisted when Clay meets Bloberta and Brick marries Maggie. Both do so out of a necessity to conform, although Clay immediately becomes an alcoholic and spirals into manic unhappiness and Brick chooses to ignore his wife. However, one man would change the entire dynamic: for Clay, it's Danielle Stopframe; for Brick, it's his teammate Skipper.

Danielle had laid eyes on Clay for years, but it wasn't until he became Orel's track coach that they began their undefined relationship. Brick and Skipper played on the same football team, which was the foundation for their lasting friendship. Danielle immediately lays his eye on Clay with clear intent to pursue him romantically, laying the groundwork for years. Skipper falls in love with Brick organically, a deep friendship turning into repressed love. Since open expressions of homosexual love are taboo, both Danielle and Skipper use Clay and Brick's wives as a proxy for sexual intimacy in an attempt to get closer. Danielle impregnates Bloberta and then leaves her, planting a bastard child into their already tumultuous marriage. Skipper attempts to sleep with Maggie, but due to an emotional collapse he ends up not being able to bring himself to do so. While Maggie suspects that there is something going on between the two men, Bloberta doesn't. Bloberta engages herself with Danielle out of her desire for genuine connection, seeking a more fulfilling relationship than the one she had with Clay. On the other hand, Maggie does so as a vessel to prove Skipper's heterosexuality, thus dismantling her suspicion of both men's involvement with each other and her husband's sexuality. This ends up failing, not mending Maggie's distrust, although Skipper and Brick were never involved romantically or sexually. In consequence, it creates a lasting breach in their marriage, one Maggie is desperate to repair by trying to get Brick to have sex with her. Perhaps this indicates the difference in actual romantic interest for both women. For Bloberta, Clay was simply the means to an end, seeking actual connection from Danielle. For Maggie, it was the opposite.

When Skipper finally confesses his love for Brick over the phone, Brick hangs up in disgust. Skipper kills himself shortly after. Brick is tortured by his guilt and possibly requited love for him, leading to alcoholism and self-destructive behaviour. Brick's and Clay's addiction and demeanor mirror each other perfectly. Both behave horribly with their families, have anger issues, neglect their partners sexually, and have an intense hatred of their own lives. However, there is one key difference: unlike Skipper, Danielle is still alive and pursuing Clay. They slowly grow closer to each other, until Danielle finally sees his true colors and becomes disillusioned by him.

Clay's future is unclear due to the show's untimely cancellation, but the canon ending is undoubtedly tragic and hopeless.

Brick's story has a similarly devastating ending.

To secure Big Daddy's inheritance, Maggie assures Brick's family that she's pregnant, which the audience knows to be impossible because Brick and Maggie haven't had sex in years. When the family leaves, Maggie closes the whiskey cabinet and tells Brick that she has every intention of making her pregnancy a reality. This suggests that Brick's life will end up largely the same as Clay's: stuck in an unhappy marriage, sexually repressed and with children they don't want.

Unfortunately, for the time being we can't know for sure how the ending of their stories parallel each other, as censorship has affected both works. Due to the Hays code, the 1958 film adaptation of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof significantly downplays the role that homophobia, sexism and racism plays in Brick's story. Skipper and Brick's relationship toned down, erasing Brick's repressed feelings and changing the ending to make it seem that he decided to have a baby rather than being sexually coerced by Maggie. Similarly, Moral Orel's explicit depiction of psychological trauma, including realistic and harrowing depictions of rape, got the show cancelled andprevented it from getting ending it deserved. I hope that by talking about these stories and destigmatizing their topics, even decades later, we can reflect on what made these characters so great and what made society reject depictions of their stories.

ESSAY BY LILI G

Growing Up in a Real Life Statesota
by Thomas Richardson

It's impossible to sit next to a handsome man like Geoff and not be smitten. That was just one of my intrusive thoughts as we watched a midnight premiere of yet another piece of Marvel trash. We couldn't help it because that brought us immense joy. We love movies, without a doubt. Given where we were born, spent our childhood, and attended high school together, it didn't come as a shock. Here we were in the Wehrenberg Campbell 16 Cinema (now an Alamo Drafthouse) with friends from our community pride group, wolfing down popcorn and pointing out who'd we smash or pass. It also got us out of the church sponsored 'Halloween' party ('*God-Fearing*' season 1 episode, anyone?). My father wouldn't have approved, but alas, there I was.

What I just described to you? Unthinkable to city elders and the cabal of so-called wise men who safeguarded the morals of those they believed were 'chosen' based on adherence to the Word of God. Think Season 2, Episode 1 '*God's Image*,' where the town leaders meet in Mr. Figurelli's corner store to discuss the change among the town's youth becoming the Figurellis. In my case, they didn't like an outwardly focused, pro-LGBTQ company sitting on prime real estate in their 'Miracle Mile' (seriously, there's a stretch of Republic Road that contains seven churches, all of whom are the ire of every Mexican and Chinese restaurant on that stretch because they give all their money to God and not to their businesses. I never really gave these behaviors much thought until I saw the glorious Adult Swim masterpiece, Moral Orel).

I was raised in Springfield, Missouri: gateway to the lower Midwest, the Queen of the Ozarks, home to the Wonders of Wildlife and people like Payne Stewart (smash), Brad Pitt (smash), Bob Barker (pass, honestly), Chappell Roan (whichever she prefers), Billy Long (HARD PASS), and Bass Pro Shops. Oh, and methamphetamine, but that's not important to this story… maybe. More importantly though, it's the BUCKLE OF THE BIBLE BELT.

The city was constructed on the twin foundations of commercialism and religion. That shouldn't come as a surprise to any student of history. Stalwart Christian founders like John Polk Campbell would establish many of the early churches in the town, including the one I was raised in, South Street Christian Church. From its early history starting in the 1820s, the Ozarks was a harsh region populated by the Osage Nation who were less than thrilled with the influx of new settlers from Kentucky and Ohio. A history of racial discrimination is prevalent as well. Fast forward through the forced removal of indigenous poples (you can leave but we'll appropriate your images for school mascots later) and the Civil War (spoiler alert, Springfield wasn't exactly sympathetic to the Union), Springfield developed a notorious reputation as a place for lynching recently freed slaves. Plus, Wild Bill Hickok shot and killed a gambler in 1865 in the town square. What a place to live, eh?

You can count on churches being at the center of most Springfieldian's lives. Who fielded intramural baseball teams? Churches. Where did high school graduation parties occur? Churches. Where did Girl Scouts sell all their cookies because they had captive audiences? Churches. The man at the podium was God as far as we were concerned. That was drilled into me at an early age; infallible, righteous, and pervasive in your spiritual well-being. I admit I truly believed that I was going to Hell because I stole a candy bar one time or made an empty threat of physical harm to that asshole Jeremy who punched me in the face (he'd sit next to me on the bus to Hell). There was Reverend Greg preaching that unless I earned my penance, a lake of fire was my destiny. Imagine being eight years old and believe you were doomed to end up in a literal lake of fire; fucking terrifying. And you sure as shit didn't argue with the minister. Cue Revered Putty in the '*Before Orel*' special: 'NO ONE QUESTIONS ME, NO ONE QUESTIONS GOD, YOU SEE?!'

The practice of ministering was held true by my father as well. He gave sporadic sermons and we had our own Bible studies. The only useful thing that emerged from them was a trip to Andy's Frozen Custard. A handful of librarians embarked on crusades to ban specific books from the county libraries. *Harry Potter*, *1984*, *The Hunger Games*, and more, were all on the librarians' hit list. At my high school there were teachers who regularly pushed a fundamentalist curriculum and marginalized a number of students who they believed were 'different' (Season 2, episode 6 '*God's Blunders*', but I consider them gifts). The largest student organization was the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and their sponsor, Mr. Jenkins, who I think exerted more influence than any other teacher or parent on that campus. The principals weren't your 'pals' and our school resource officer was a sphinx that you never made eye-contact with.

Everything I just described to you has their '*Moral Orel*' counterpart. Rev. Greg was Rev. Putty, down to the hairpiece and persistent mid-life crises. Miss Censordolls were rampant in every library, making them miserable places for book lovers. A father like Clay Puppington who had no problem using a belt to make his point. Schools frowned upon learning outside the set curriculum; teachers of mine who were like Miss Sculptham. Mr. Jenkins evolved into a Coach Stopframe, but only after his family outed him at a church Christmas program (or so I'm told). But the most scandalous and entertaining comparison? Principal Fakey and Nurse Bendy. Ask anyone in my graduating class who caught our assistant principal and school resource officer smashing hips and they'll have no shortage of gossip.

Why do I make these comparisons? Because when I first watched *Moral Orel*, I couldn't help but see my family and community in their Moralton doppelgangers. Many writers base their characters on real-life examples, but Dino Stamatopoulos' work hits insanely close to home. This show was so acutely real-time that I cried. While I wasn't as precocious as Orel, the religious fervor and Protestant fundamentalist attitudes pushed on me did not reflect my personal beliefs of what constituted good and morality. Anyone who saw the '*Nature*' episode will label it as the turning point for both Orel and the show's tone. I rewatched that episode constantly, finding it reflected my own dark epiphany of how flawed my faith really was. The veneer of childhood covered up a largely dark environment. This wall was put up by authority figures to compensate for their shortcomings, but more importantly, their sins. Deep down, many authoritative personalities were deeply flawed and used faith as a cover.

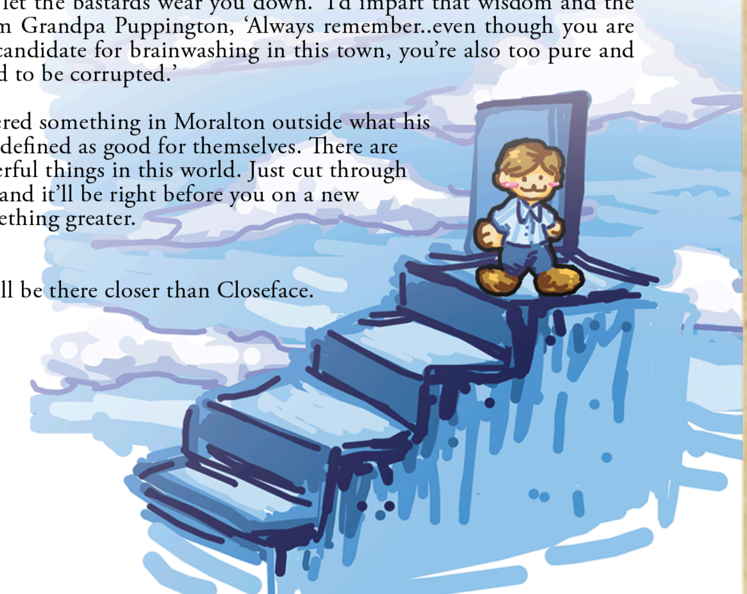
Through my father's legal work as an attorney, I learned a lot about the people who while righteous in my childhood were worlds apart. You think only non-church goers do drugs? Wrong. Dozens of church leaders were regularly busted with meth and heroin (see Season 1, Episode 3 '*Charity*'). A beloved community fixture who children adored? Sent to prison for possessing some unsavory things and later committed suicide (Season 3, episode 4 '*Alone*'). Watching the show, you see that Orel has similar realizations about the adults in his life. Principal Fakey's adultery, his parent's terrible marriage, Miss Censordoll's grooming; all these aspects changed Orel's attitude on love, piety, race, and relationships.

After watching all three seasons and the '*Before Orel*' special, I had another epiphany. Despite Orel and I both growing up in a rigorous environment where dogma dictated actions, we managed to find meaningful connections with people and forged our own path in life. Orel didn't let his alcoholic father destroy his ability to bond with his own children and neither will it happen to me. The same can be said for recognizing the dark places our minds go when beset with depression. Orel found people to form lasting friendships with who gave him new perspectives on life. I can say the same. Brick was my Doughy; Kat is my Stephanie; and Chel became my Christina. Who said you can only form friendships based on the strict rules of church? Orel found the caring paternal figure in the most unlikely person in Moralton, Coach Stopframe, and experienced the familial nurturing he so desperately sought. For me, Mr. Jenkins' new identity made it easier to become friends with him outside the school setting. If you had told me years before high school graduation that I would someday be taunting trashy pop culture with fellow pride members, I would have fled in terror because my dad might have overheard. These days, it doesn't bother me one iota.

I'll leave with probably the most heart-warming lesson of the show. The comfort of grandparents is more poignant than we can ever imagine. To be on my grandparent's rural property was freedom. My grandmother's warmth and sweetness was the light in a dismal world. She dug deep into my jaded exterior, and retrieved the self-esteem that was missing. She made me feel worthwhile. One morning while sitting in a rocking chair with my grandfather, coffee mug in hand, I asked him some generic question about life and his response was epic: 'Don't let the bastards wear you down.' I'd impart that wisdom and the wisdom from Grandpa Puppington, 'Always remember..even though you are the perfect candidate for brainwashing in this town, you're also too pure and good hearted to be corrupted.'

Orel discovered something in Moralton outside what his community defined as good for themselves. There are other wonderful things in this world. Just cut through the bullshit and it'll be right before you on a new path to something greater.

Trust me, it'll be there closer than Closeface.



FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PREACHER
MORALTON AND THE PROTESTANT DOCTRINE: AN ESSAY BY KATIE

Protestantism is not a phenomenon native to North America, yet its presence and teachings are echoed amongst some of the biggest religious groups on the continent. Derivatives from the Reformation are prominent, especially in the Southeastern United States. Each denomination stems from the fundamental teachings of Martin Luther, the Father of the Reformation, before branching out due to disagreements and different interpretations of scripture. God's Favourite Protestant Church (GFPC) is amongst the many organisations whose baseline doctrines have evolved from the Reformation, yet time and time we continue to see its congregants struggle with following even the basics of Christianity.

i The values of GFPC couldn't be more polar than the teachings of the reformation's leaders. The sermons served by the pastor are constantly diluted by his own perverse views of scripture, with his misteachings resonating throughout the town's echo chamber-like closedness. Despite their self-declared following of the 'protestant' faith, GFPC does not follow any of these fundamentals. Most churches whose teachings stem from Reformed Christianity pride themselves with stark doctrinal values that contrast those of the Catholic Church. As a result, many scholars have come together and formed an understanding of core beliefs that summarize and question the ultimate authority that the papacy claimed to hold. The congregants of GFPC avoid many of these beliefs, or choose to ignore them due to their own greed.

ij Throughout the show, we are introduced to the concept of the Lost Commandments. Clay is taught in childhood that when Moses broke the first set of tablets (Exodus 32:19), that God made a new version that omitted the 63 originals, leading them to be considered as "lost." In reality, these were manmade rules set out by the community members in order to police certain aspects of life that in their eyes, should be treated as dogma. This is in blatant disregard to **SOLA SCRIPTURA** (By scripture alone), which revolves around the idea that the scripture written in the Bible should supersede any traditions that may have come from man. It is directly referenced in 2 Peter 1:21 NIV – *"For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."* We learn in Passing (S3E8) that the Lost Commandments had been invented by Angela Puppington, likely with the intention to guide her son Clay to become the perfect Christian. This doesn't take away the fact that these Lost Commandments are heretical, and should not exist.

iij In *Charity* (S1E3), Orel is introduced to the concept through a service at church. Reverend Putty delivers a sermon, urging the people of Moralton to help the poor while threatening that they'd burn in hell if they don't comply. While the topic encourages goodwill, it is expected by the congregation that such a service would grant them salvation. **SOLA GRATIA** (By grace alone) however, follows the idea that judgment is of God's grace and not that of human merit. This ties into the concept of **JUSTIFICATIO SOLA FIDE** (Justification by faith alone), where salvation isn't defined by good works, but rather by one's faith in God. This is written in Romans 4:4-5 NIV – *"Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness."* Reverend Putty misuses the idea of good works, falsely leading his congregants to act out of fear, rather than of real charitable actions. He speaks of working to avoid damnation not only in *Charity*, but also in *Be Fruitful and Multiply* (S2E10), where he attempts to persuade the congregation to procreate in order to boost his own agenda of going on a date with Stephanie. This is not a result of theological misteaching, but rather of his own personal greed.

iiij Historically, penance and confession have been ideas rejected by the leaders of the reformation. Martin Luther's famous 95 Theses touches upon this, challenging the idea that the leaders of the church can give and remit punishment, as indulgences are not a valid form of works. While the idea of confession and guilt are discouraged by the community, the church still maintains a twisted form of that service. GFPC is distinct from that ideology, as Reverend Putty runs a 'Repressional' for the congregants with aims to help them quash their problems instead of fixing them. The citizens of Moralton deliberately sin, and are encouraged to ignore their guilt. We are told in Hebrews 10:26-27 NIV – *"If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."* Despite this clear line of scripture, no attempt is made by the congregants to quell their own misdoings through genuine repentance.

v Moralton's churchgoers tend to bend what's morally correct based on their own biases. This all falls back on the nature of the church, and how they handle interpretation of the Bible. Most of the scripture is taken at face value, and when not, is shared through one common man. GFPC is an institution that follows the idea that God's actions are to remain unquestioned. The head pastor, Reverend Putty, is treated as an extension of that infallibility, to the point that he tells Orel that he too isn't to be questioned. In *Beforel Orel - Trust*, Orel and Rev. Putty get into a conflict over questioning God's reality, as well as by unintentionally challenging the Reverend's credibility. In Moralton, it is considered taboo, if not reprehensible to think critically against what's being taught during the sermons. This ultimately leads to the religious downfall of most of their citizens. Reverend Putty makes a terrific point in *Innocence* (S3E3), where he explains to the congregation that more thought needs to be put into coaching Orel. If only the congregation put thought into their own actions, and had the gall to understand what they were doing, before wallowing in their own sin.

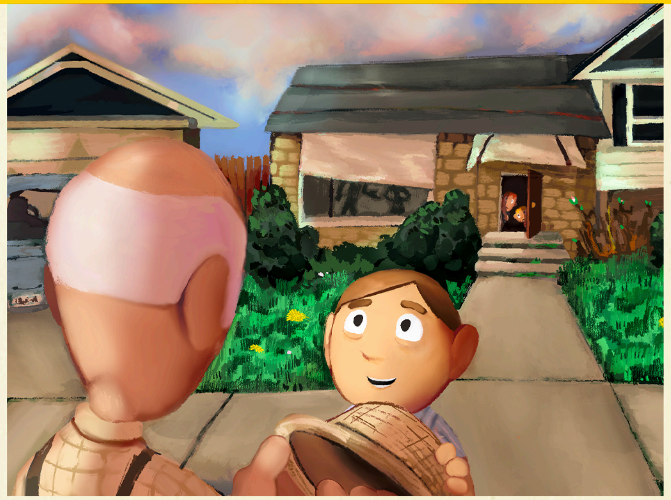
MORAL OREL
Dead Sea scrolls

Penned by Moralton University
Collected from scripts and forum
Q&As by Dino Stamatopoulos

Art by
Mandrillose
Dr-Chosenberg
PEGASO
Riz Delaney
Neverfilth
ToonyGiulia
Tanblaque
Hatteri
Gio

***Moral Orel* got cancelled halfway through season three,** shuttering production on the last 7 episodes of the season as well as the planned fourth and fifth seasons that would have re-christened the show *Moralton* and continued the ensemble based structure of the third season.

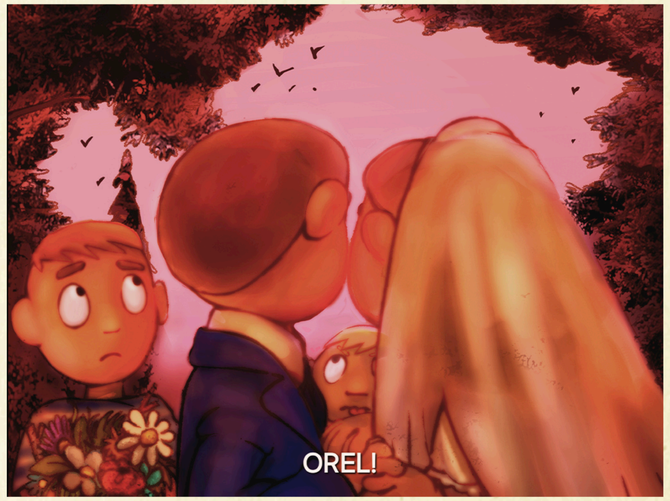
Luckily for us, Dino has generously provided full scripts for "Narcissism" and "Raped," and synopses for the remaining episodes. These episodes weren't lost or thrown out, so we prefer to use the term unproduced. The following is a presentation of what the rest of season three was going to look like:



PUTTY
"For the first time ever, I care about someone else other than me.
And by coincidence, it's you!
Congratulations. Isn't that great?"

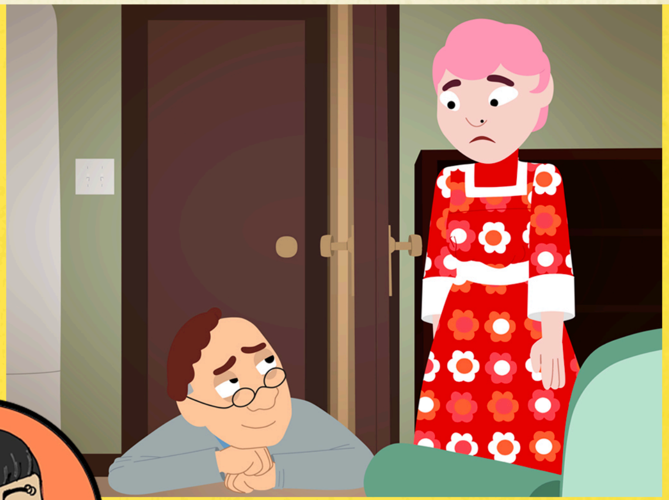
Untitled Christina Episode

In the episodes "The Lord's Prayer" and "Closeface," we got to see Orel and Christina's relationship begin to develop. Dino mentioned that he was interested in writing another episode that centers on them, but he did not elaborate on the details. We have decided to present an artist's rendition of what this episode might have been, which we glean to be some sort of Moonrise Kingdom situation. Riz, the artist, has titled this concept "Eloped."



Easter

"Sacrifice", the 11th episode of season 3, had originally been intended to be a two parter. The first part was the episode in which Clay avoids the church on Easter Sunday, immediately after the events of "Nature". The unproduced second part would have been about Clay's ailing father, Arthur Puppington, moving into the family home to live out his final days in Orel's bed. Little else is known about this plotline, other than Arthur being a continued presence in season 3 that would provide Orel with an alternative (atheistic) perspective on his daily foibles.

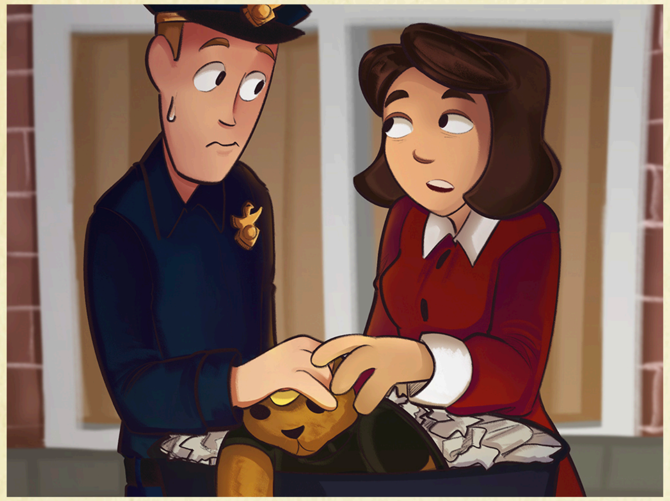


STEPHANIE
"Well, I think that Reverend Stretch- Breath
would say that all of her is still there...
it's just less expanded."

Narcissism

This is the first of two episodes that have a complete script. In this episode Putty finally gets the sexual attention from women that he's always wanted, but finds that his mind keeps wandering back to Florence Papermouth. Putty struggles with the realization that the superficial things that made him reject her have become what he loves most about her. The pair have an emotionally charged encounter where they reveal the intimate details of their inner lives. Putty expresses a desire to become a better person, but Florence does not believe him. In the end, he wins her over not through a grand romantic gesture but through a genuine moment of emotional vulnerability.

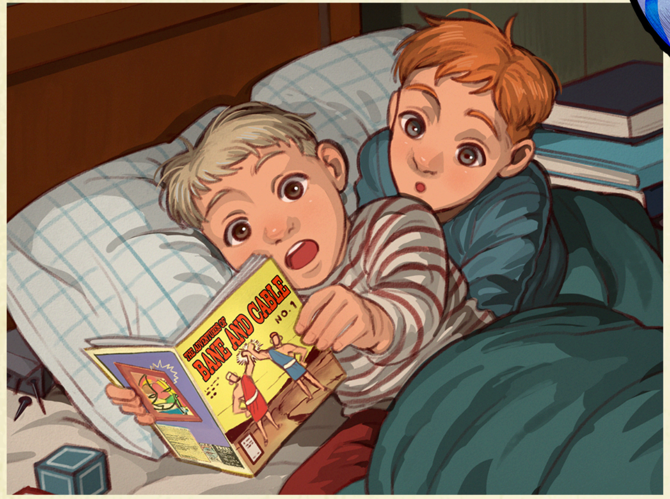
This episode is a significant turning point in the Reverend Putty's arc, who learns to see women as human beings rather than objects of desire.



Untitled Blobermouth Episode

This episode, which would center on Bloberta Puppington and Officer Roger Papermouth, was described by Dino as the start of something that would be "good for the both of them." Although he did not have a detailed concept for the episode, it would have included an important scene where Bloberta and Roger cross paths outside of the Aloneford and reach into the same trash can for Nurse Bendy's discarded Sonny Bear. This event would have ignited their affair and been the catalyst for Bloberta's emotional journey in the later seasons of the show.

MISS SCULPTHAM
"Shhh. Quiet.
You'll scare the smaller prisoners."

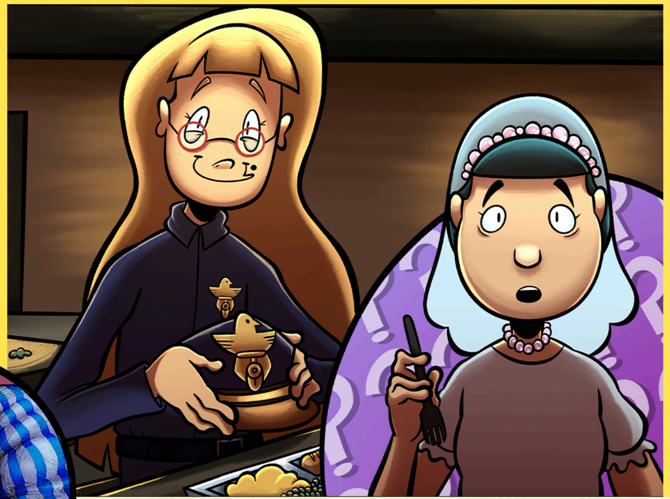


Death

This episode would have featured a pivotal moment in Orel's life: the death of Arthur Puppington. Orel is deeply impacted by the loss of his grandfather, and none of the adults in his life are able to provide a satisfactory solution. Orel copes by turning goth – a version of Orel fondly referred to as "emo Orel" in the fandom – and drowning his sorrows in Christian death metal. With the events of "Death" in mind, the Multiple Godgasm poster displayed in Orel's room since the very first season of the show serves as an omen of change. Other information about this episode is largely unknown since Dino has kept the details close to his chest, but that might change soon. Now that a Moral Orel movie is in the works, we may just be lucky enough to finally see this storyline brought to life on our screens.

Raped

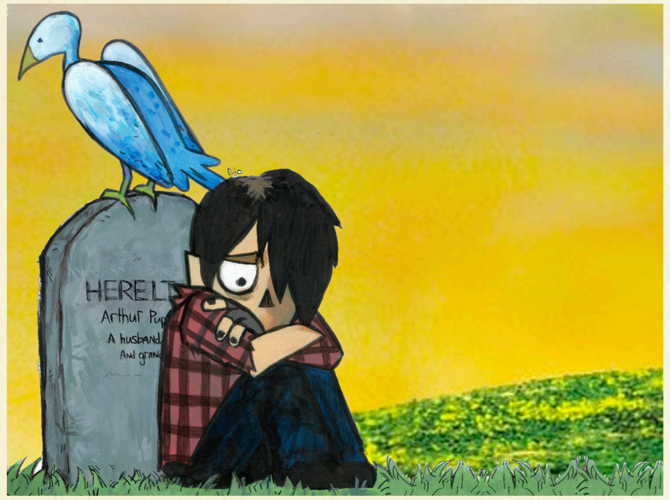
This is the second of two episodes that have a complete script. Taking place after the events of "Alone," it focuses on Agnes Sculptham's attempt to secure stability and a good reputation for herself after she learns that her coathanger abortion was only half successful. She uses a class field trip to look for a husband at Freedom County Prison. There she meets and quickly becomes engaged to Ray Pistwell, a rapist and cellmate of the recently deceased Cecil Creepler, but the wedding is called off when Ray gets cold feet over his loyalty to Cecil. Despite the broken engagement, not all hope is lost for Agnes. Officer Plotwhist, a prison guard, is smitten by Agnes and wants to marry her. Agnes is unimpressed until Officer Plotwhist surprises her by revealing herself to be a woman named Mary. In an even more shocking twist, Agnes finds herself attracted to Mary. Although their request to marry is denied, this episode gives us a happy ending for the usually dark and sardonic Agnes Sculptham.

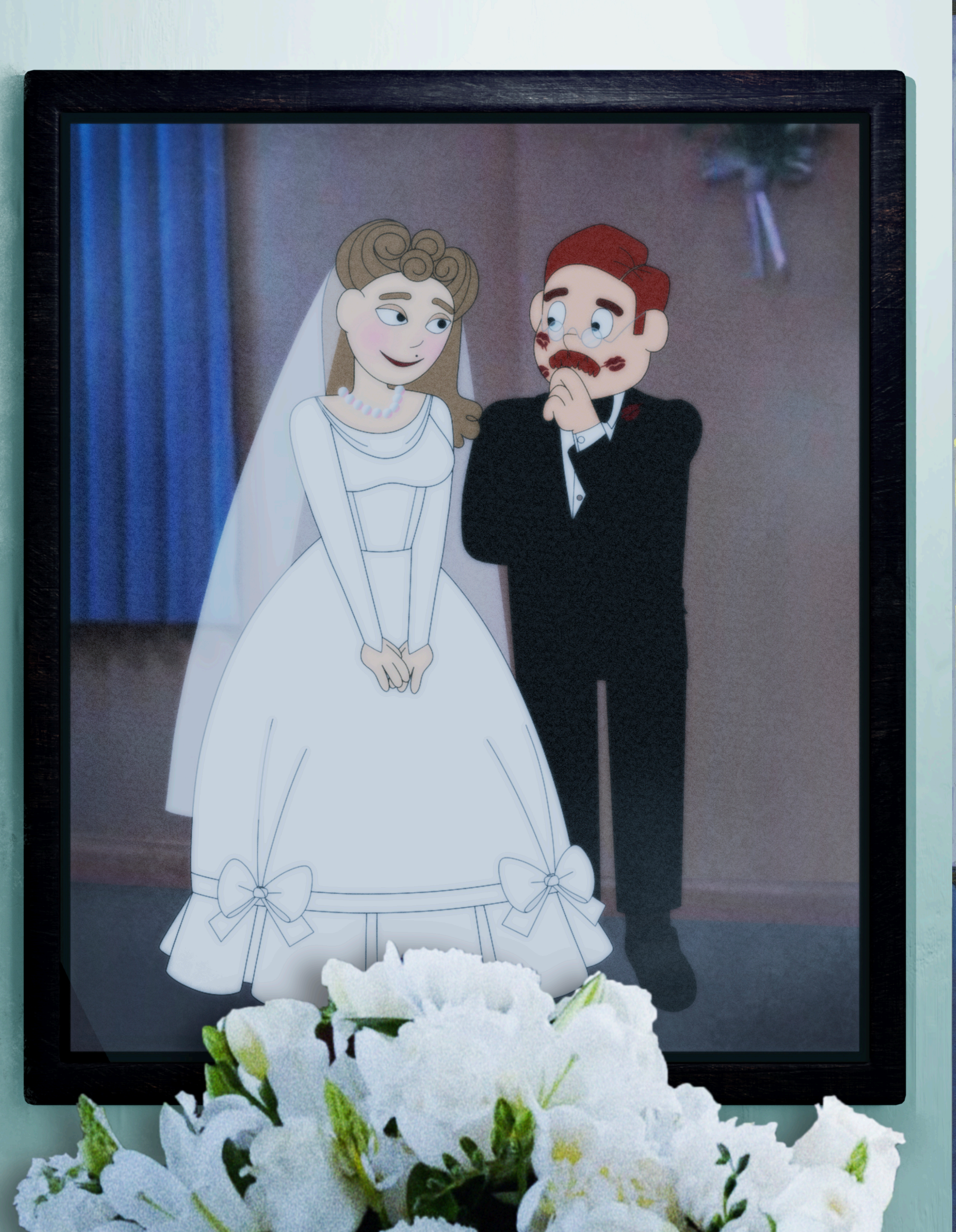


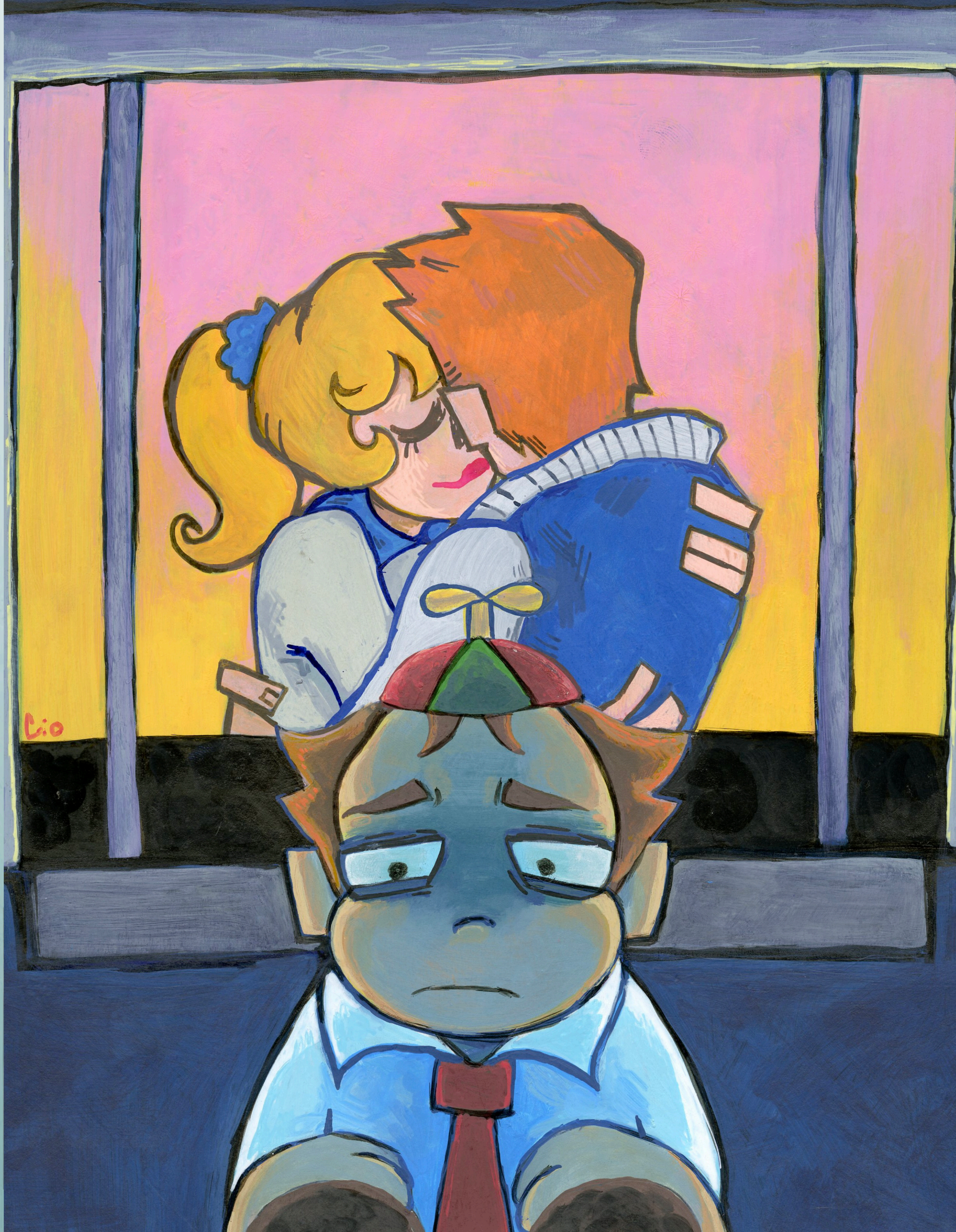
ARTHUR
"Yeah, most people aren't usually good at having very good ideas. Just let 'em do it. If they're old enough to get married, they're old enough to deal with a huge, dumb mistake."

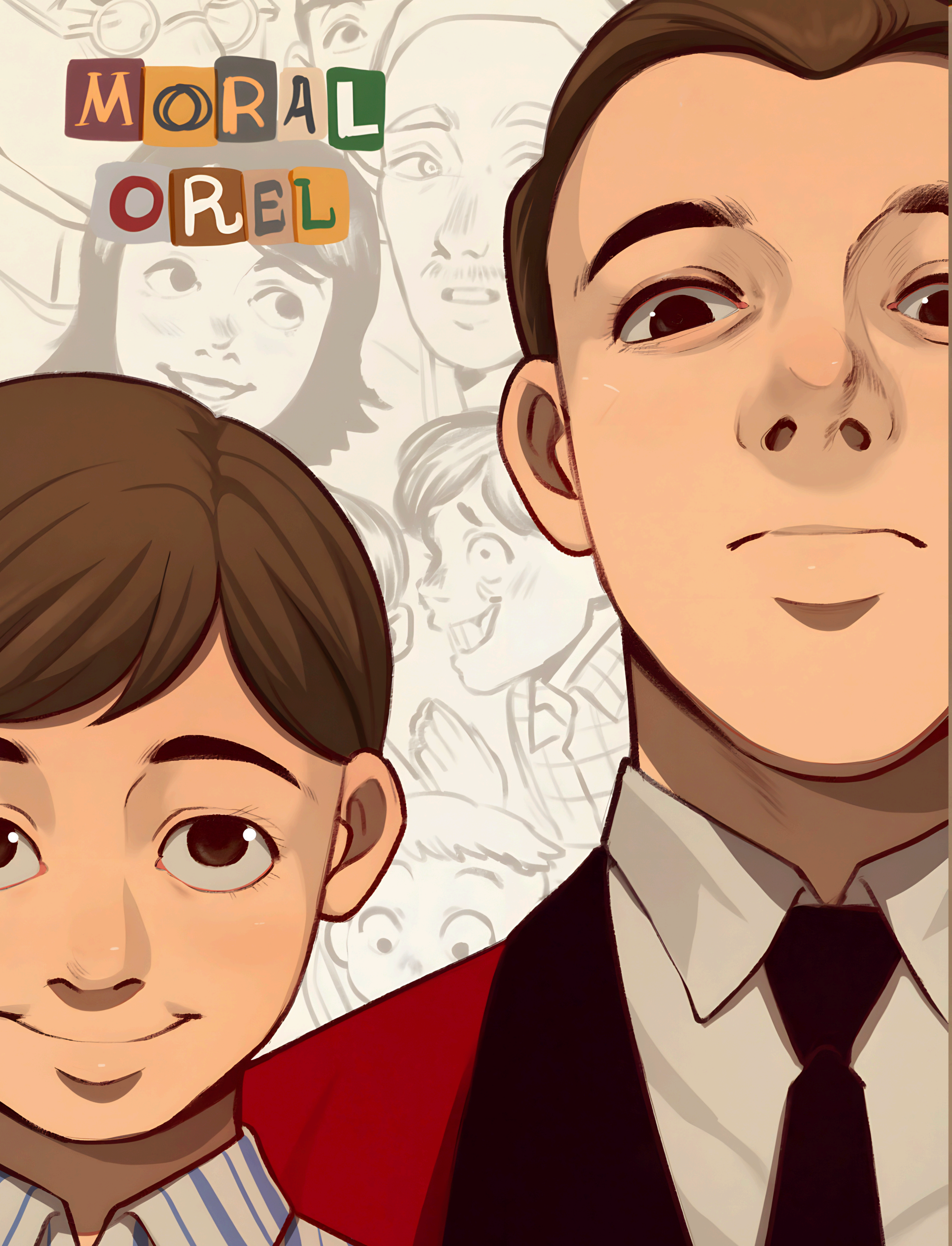
Nurture

This episode would have focused on Shapey and Block's relationship, specifically the ways in which they nurture each other in the absence of an attentive parental figure. Not much else is known about this episode other than that it would take place sometime between "Sacrifice" – where Shapey is first able to find the words to describe his feelings – and "Honor" – where we see the boys joyfully caroling together despite the traumatic events happening around them. These moments give us small glimpses into the boys' development, which would have taken center stage in this unproduced episode.

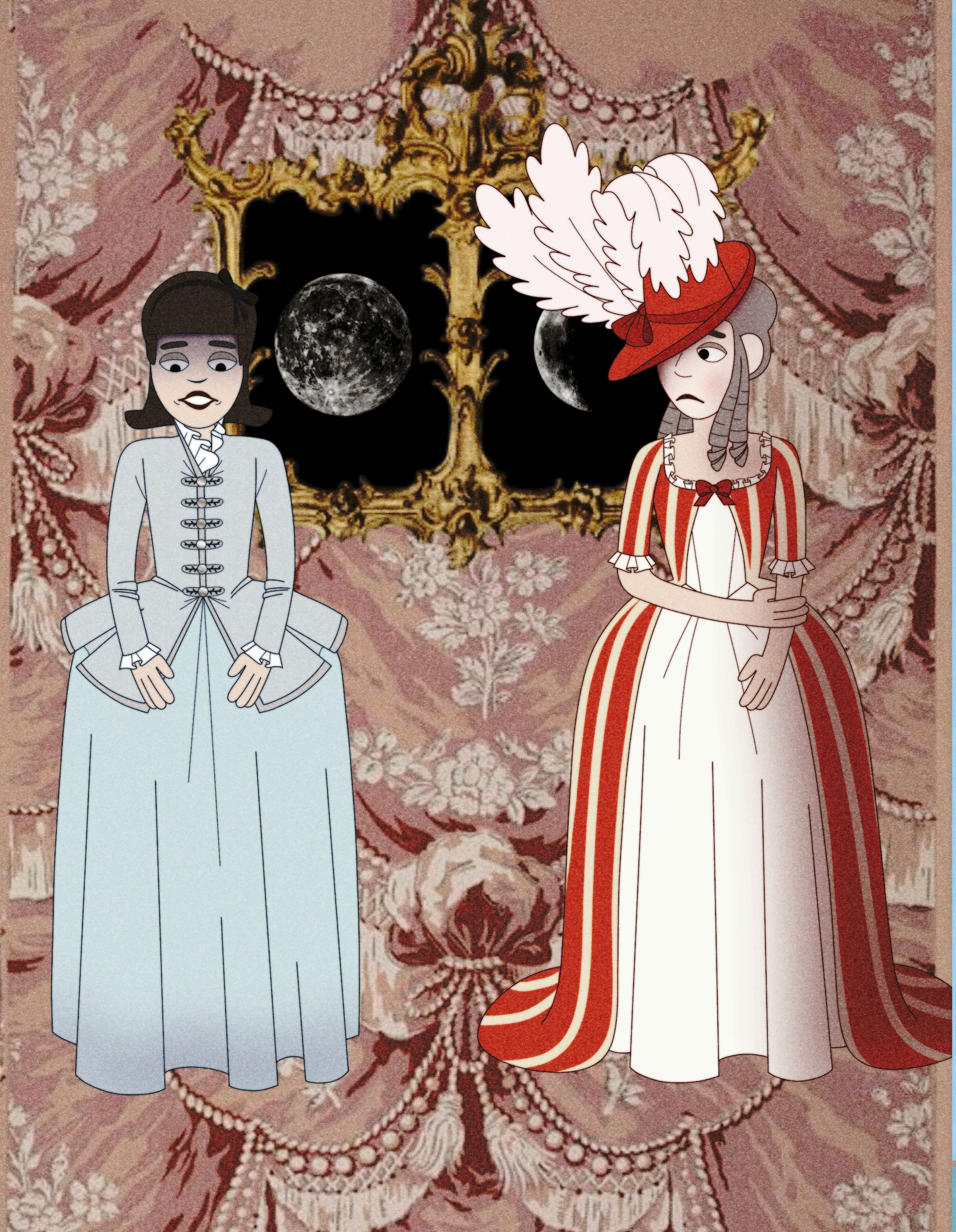


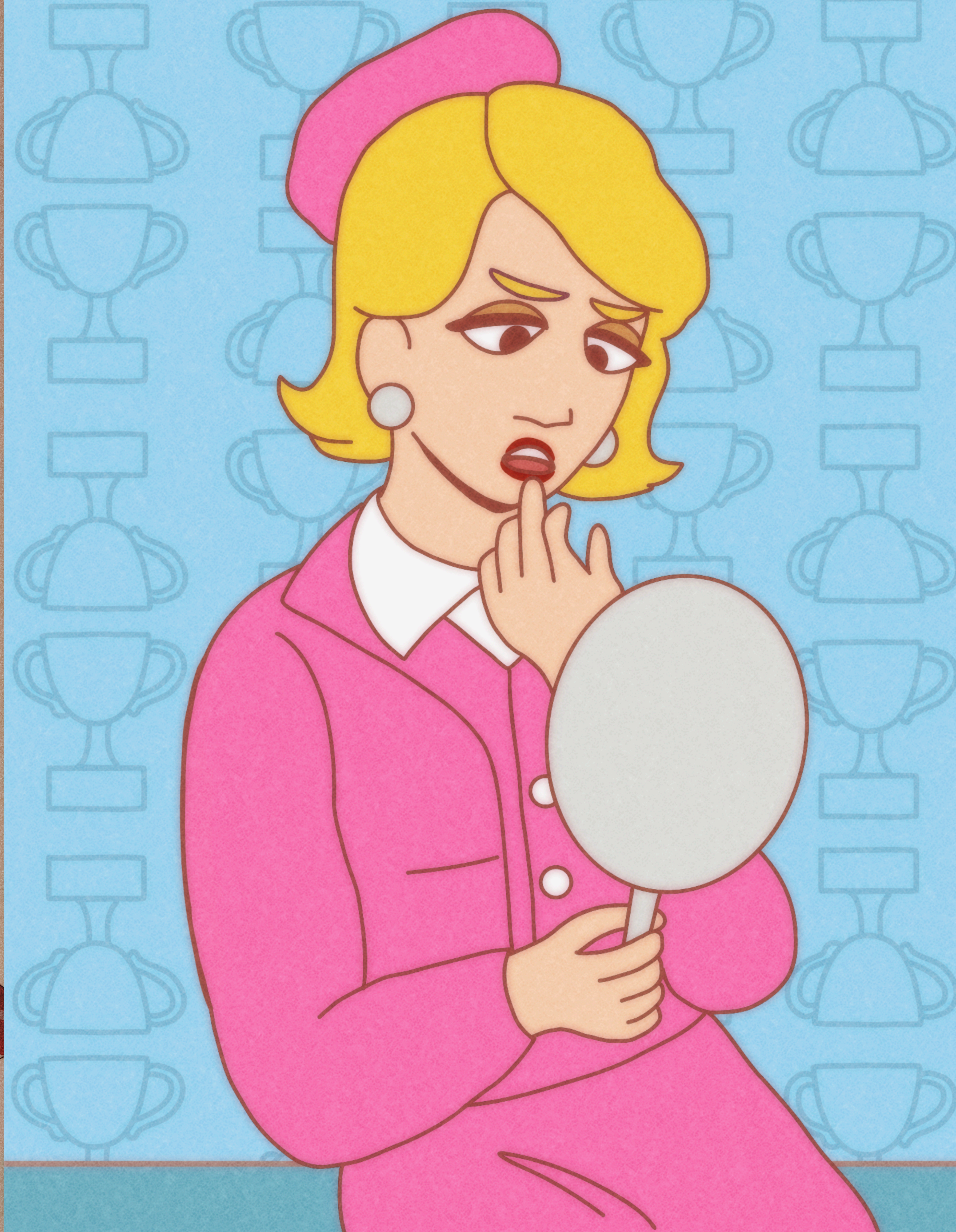


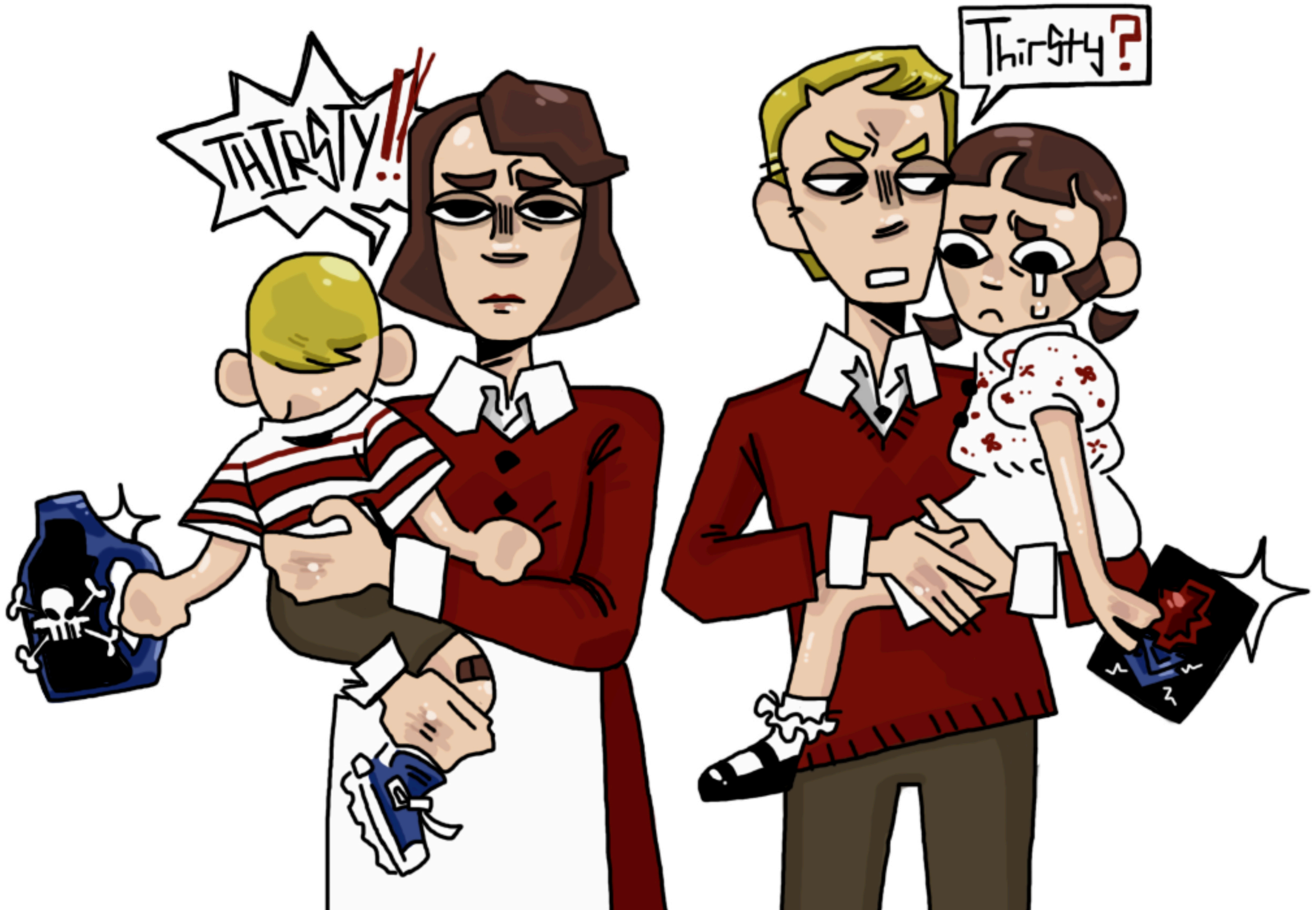


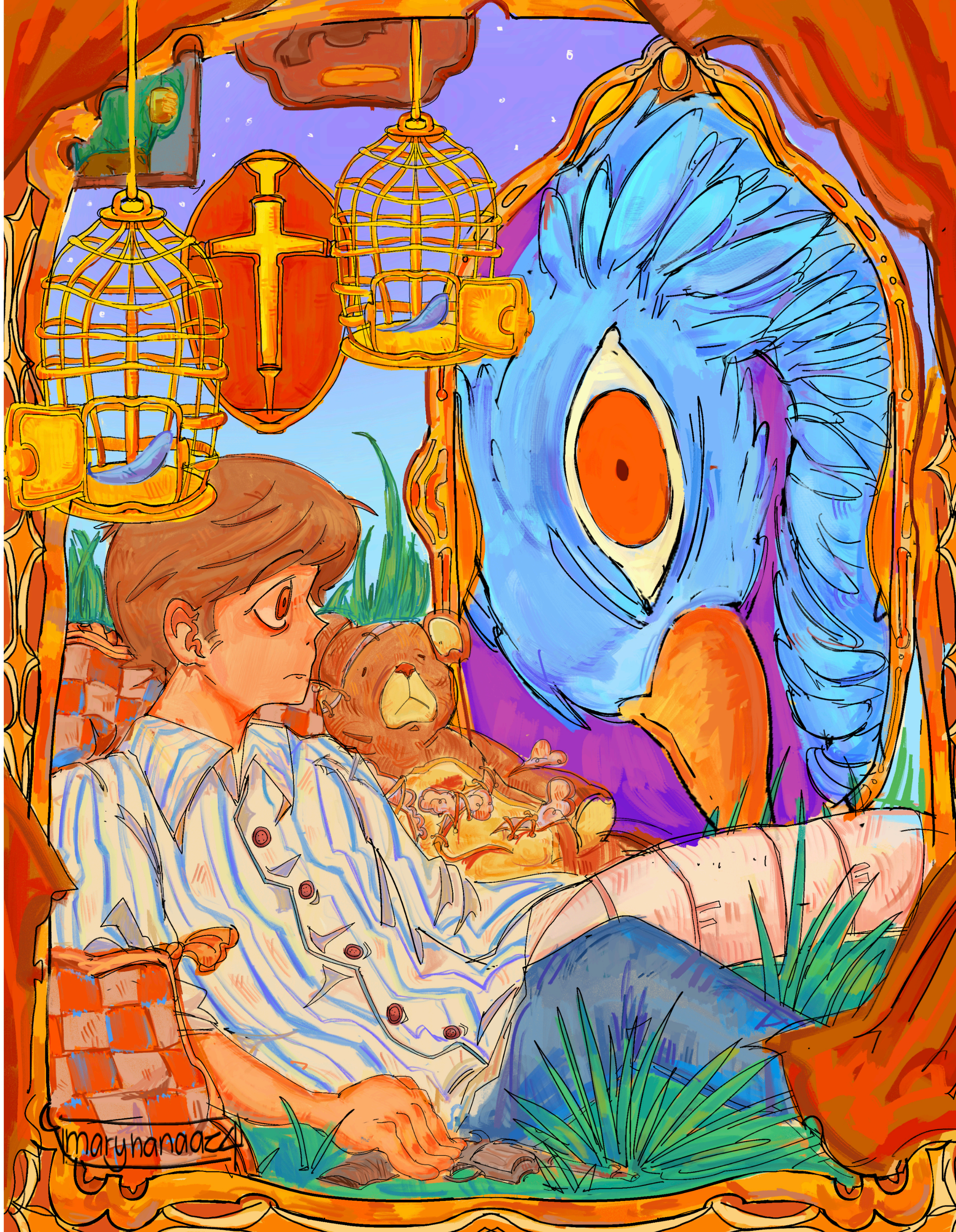

MORAL
OREL

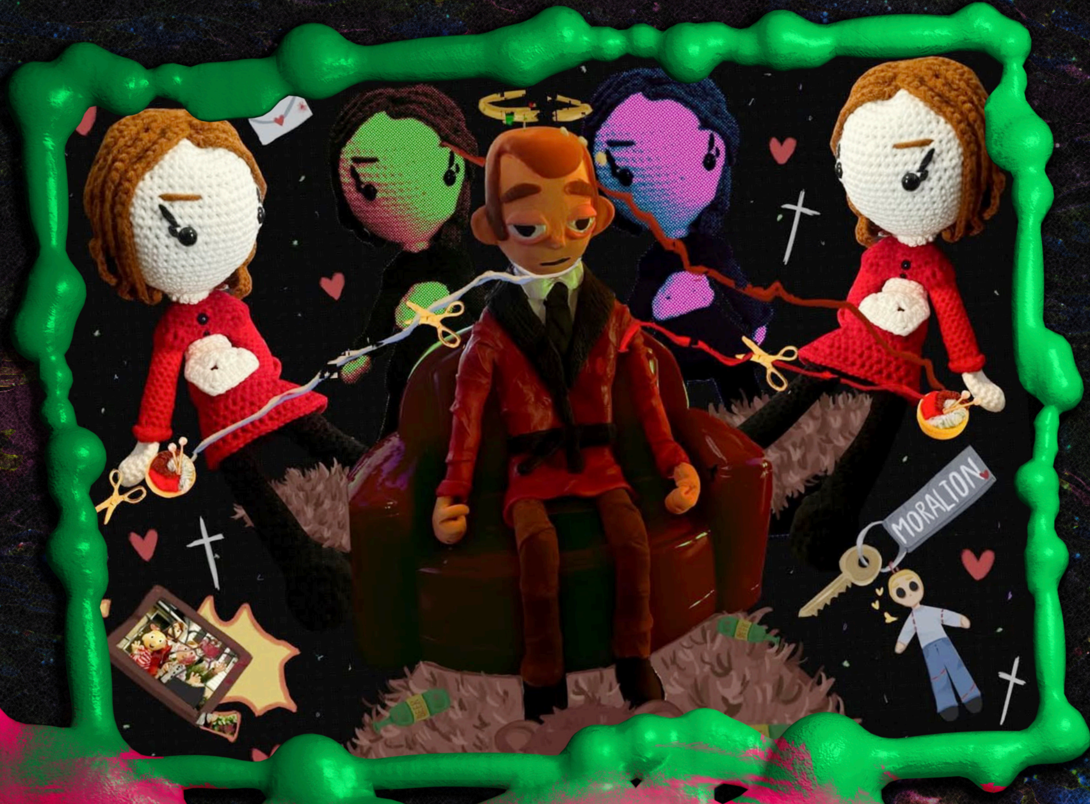
SONNY+ ME ♡
JOE

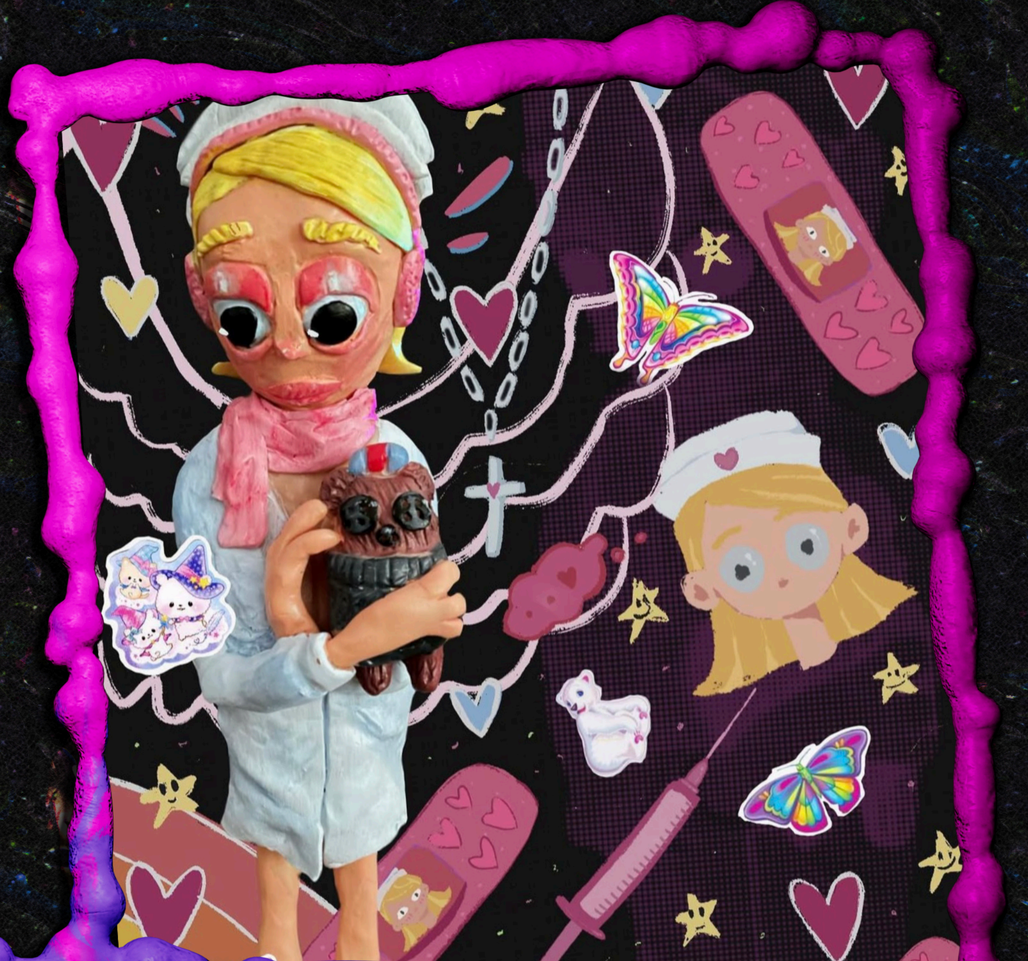





THIRSTY!!
Thirsty?

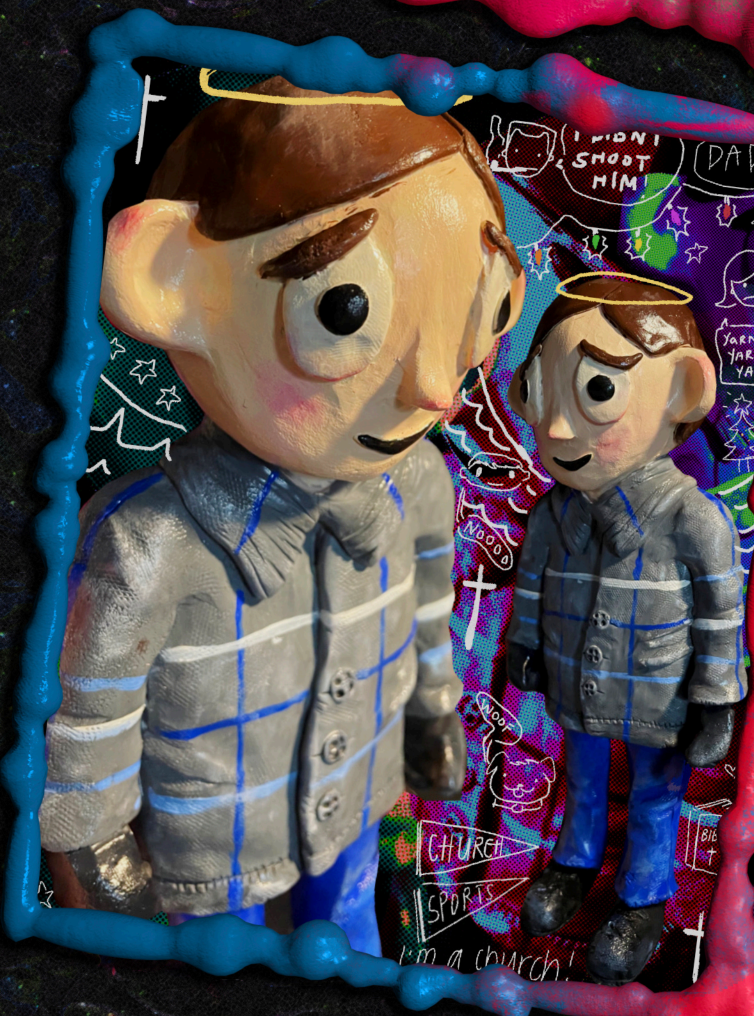

maryhanaaz4

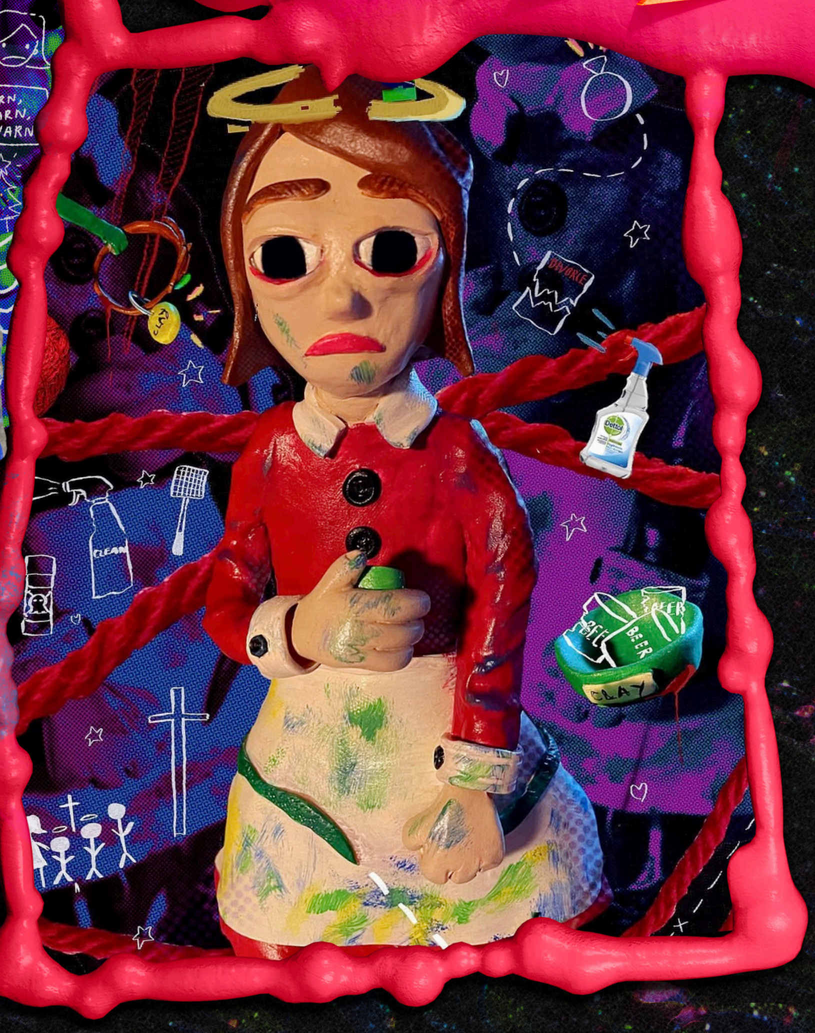


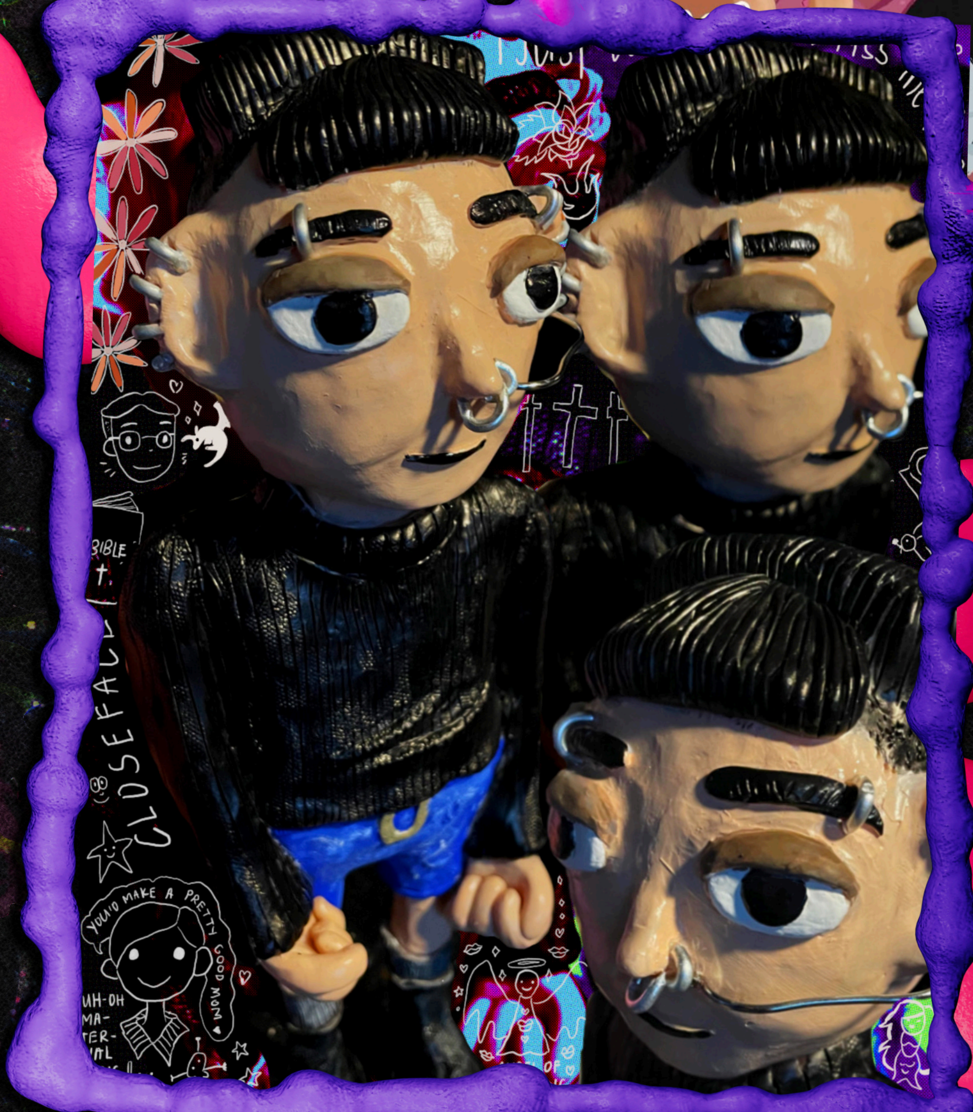


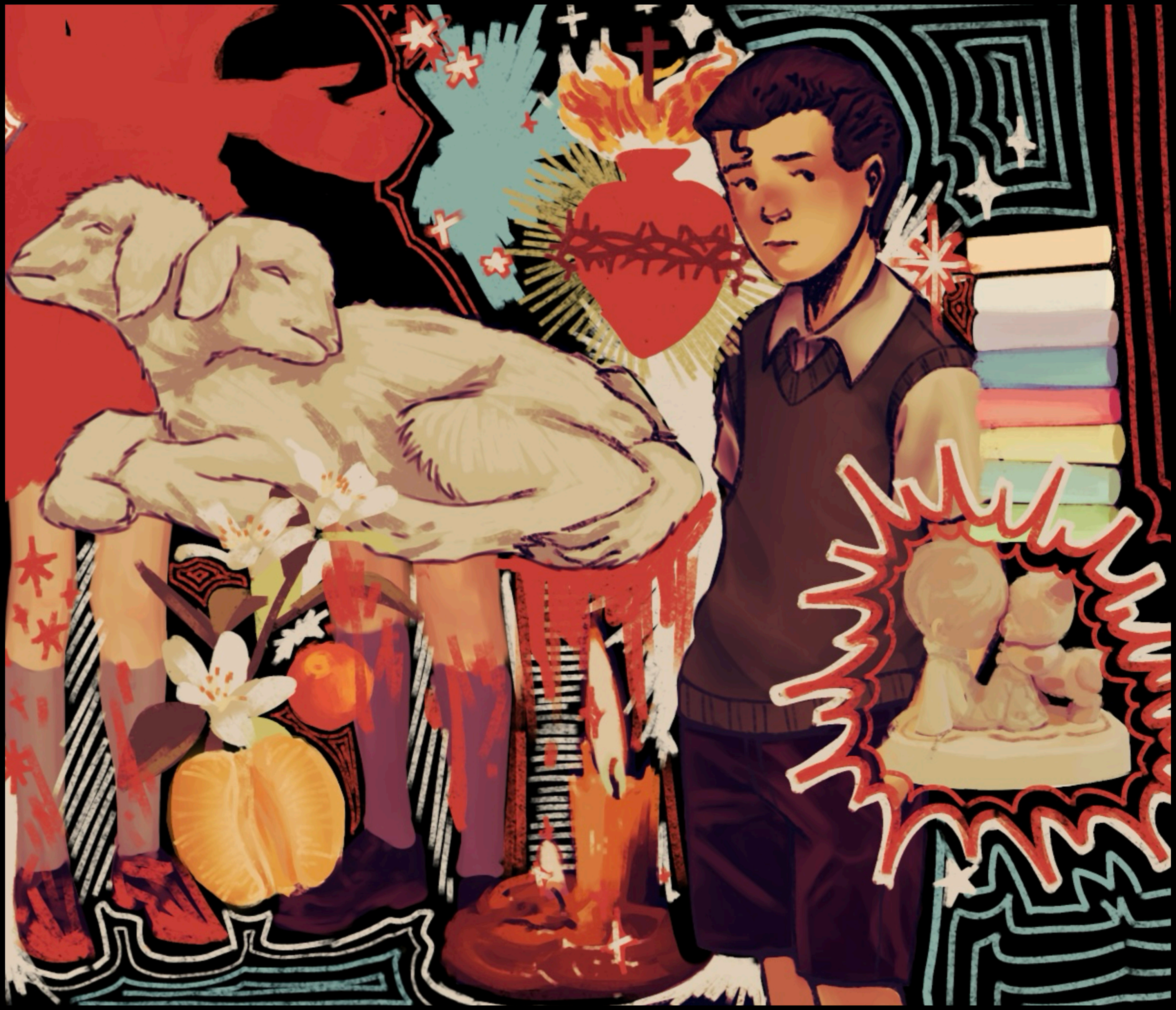
from the desk of

LALI


DAD
YARN, YARN, YARN
CHURCH
SPORTS
I'm a church!

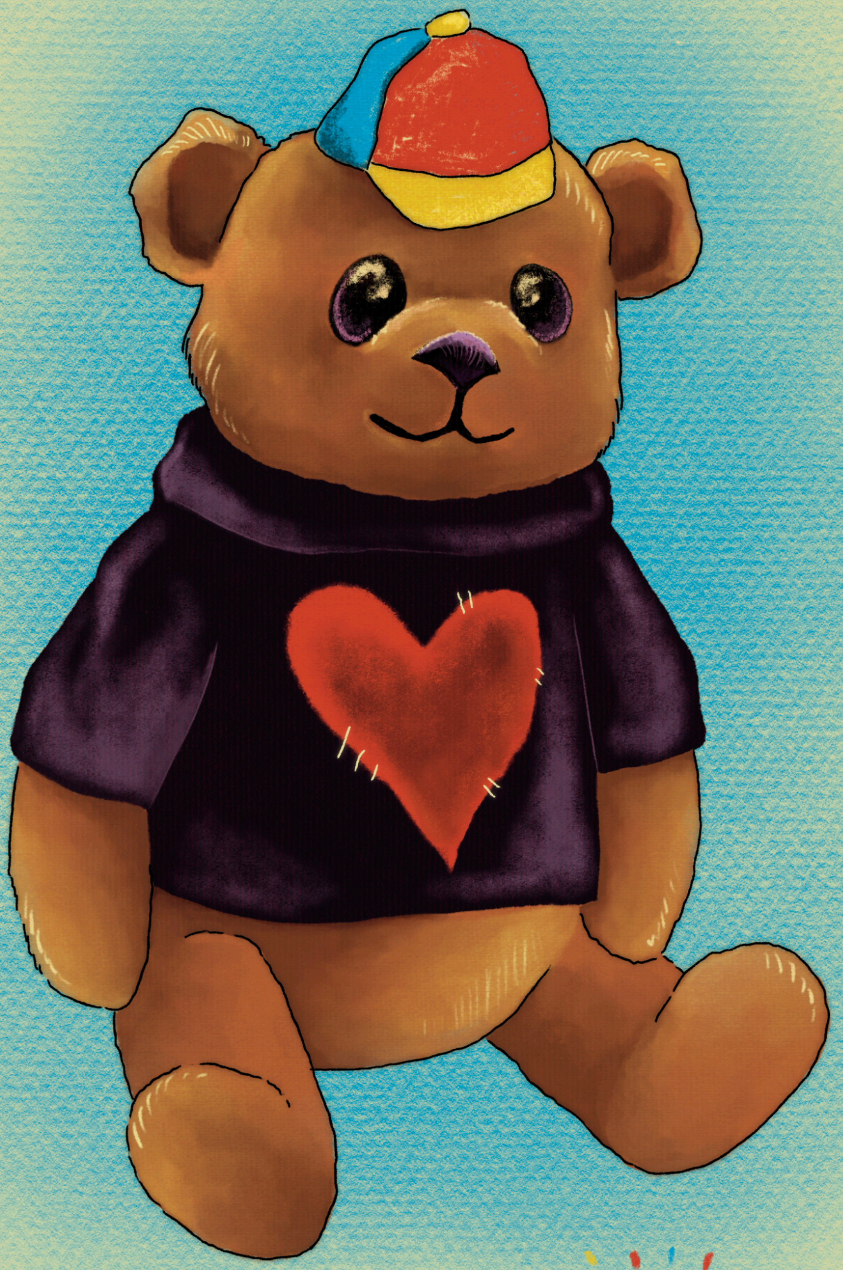






Sonny just doesn't work anymore.

Because he got old and his batteries ran out?

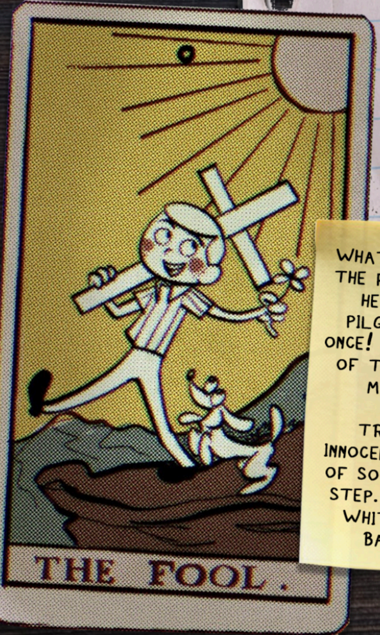


NO. yours ran ON

THE MORAL ORCANA

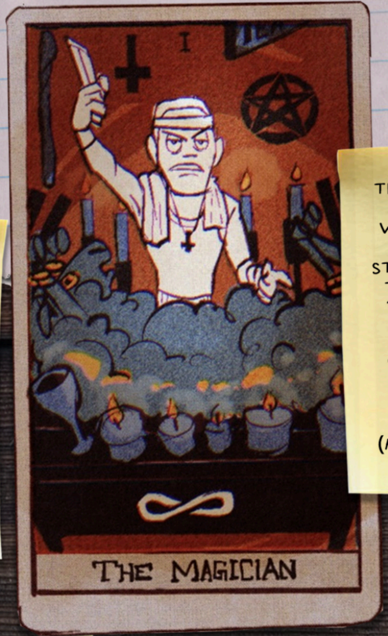
I WASN'T BIG ON TAROT UNTIL ONE FATEFUL DAY WHEN MY SISTER CAME INTO A ROOM AND DUMPED HER SMALL SUNDRY OF TAROT DECKS ON ME, WITH THE ONLY INSTRUCTION BEING TO GET THEM OUT OF HER SIGHT AND AS FAR AWAY FROM HER AS POSSIBLE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TERRIBLE FATES SHE FORESAW IN HER CARDS BUT I WAS SOON UNDER THEIR THRALL: *I DON'T QUITE COLLECT THEM, BUT I DON'T NOT?* I LIKE THE POTENTIAL OF TAROT FOR STORYTELLING. YOU CAN ACTUALLY READ THE MAJOR ARCANA AS THE JOURNEY OF THE FOOL, WHO ENCOUNTERS MANY FRIENDS AND FOES IN HIS PURSUIT. I THINK OF IT AS A RORSCHACH TEST THAT CAN DIAGNOSE WHATEVER IS AT THE BACK OF YOUR MIND. I HAD TO COMBINE IT WITH MY LOVE FOR MY FAVORITE CHRISTIAN PUPPET SHOW....

**THIS INTERPRETATION IS BASED ON THE CLASSIC RIDER-WAITE SMITH DECK*



WHAT IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD ABOUT THE FOOL IS THAT HE IS NOT AN IDIOT. HE'S JUST AT THE START OF HIS PILGRIMAGE. YOU WERE GREEN TOO, ONCE! THE FOOL IS THE MAIN CHARACTER OF THIS JOURNEY AND SHOULD BE THE MAIN CHARACTER OF ANY DECK.

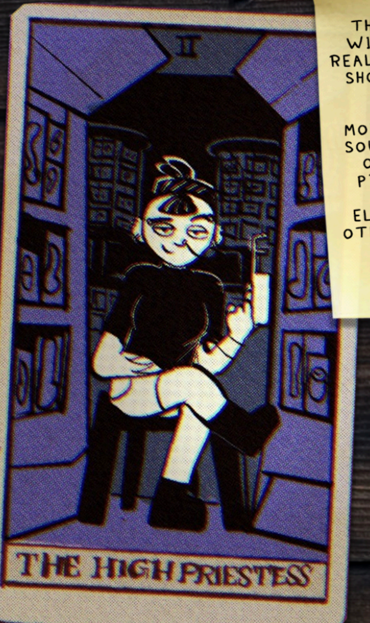
TRADITIONALLY THE FOOL IS AN INNOCENT SOUL UNTAINTED BY THE ILLS OF SOCIETY, AND FAILS TO WATCH HIS STEP. OREL CARRIES HIS FAITH AND A WHITE FLOWER OF PURITY, WITH BARTHOLOMEW AT HIS HEELS.



THE MAGICIAN IS A SOLITARY RITUALIST WITH THE POWER TO MANIFEST HIS WILL. HE HAS EVERYTHING HE NEEDS TO BRING ABOUT WHAT HE DESIRES. STOPFRAME DOES NOT SEEM CONVINCED OF THIS AND TRIES TO ACHIEVE HIS GOALS BY OTHER, LESS THAN SAVORY MEANS.

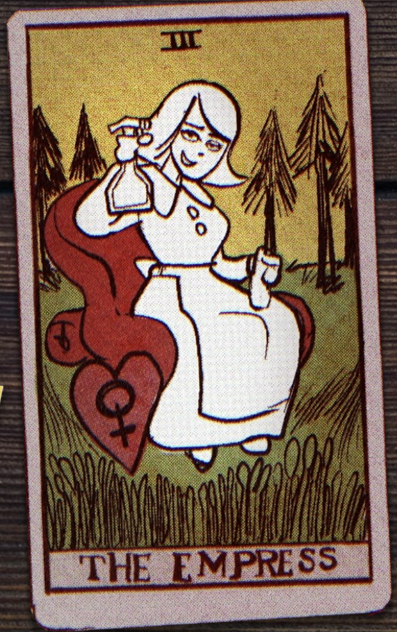
DANIELLE STOPFRAME IS THE "MANIFESTOR" OF THE SERIES, SINCE HIS ACTIONS LEAD TO THE MAIN CONFLICTS PRESENTED IN SEASON 1 OF THE SHOW.

(ALSO HIS ESTABLISHING SCENE IS PRETTY ICONIC AND SHOULD BE IMMORTALIZED)



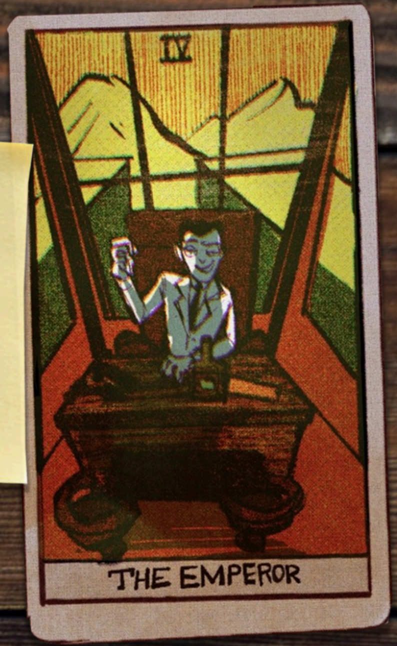
THE HIGH PRIESTESS IS CONCERNED WITH THE DIVINE FEMININE AND THE REALM OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS. THE SEX SHOP IS CALLED *BURIED* PLEASURES. COULD IT BE MORE OBVIOUS?

MORE IMPORTANTLY, STEPHANIE IS A SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE FOR OREL, OFFERING HIM WISDOM AND PRESENTING OPTIONS THAT AREN'T READILY AVAILABLE TO HIM ELSEWHERE. SHE OPENS HIS MIND TO OTHER POSSIBILITIES AND ENCOURAGES HIM TO SEARCH WITHIN FOR ANSWERS.



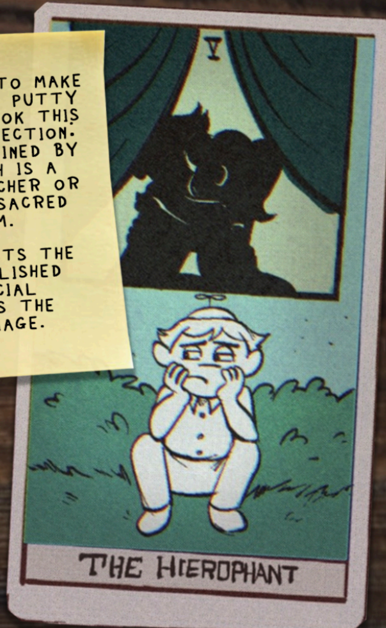
THE EMPRESS (AND ALSO THE EMPEROR) ARE YOUR MOM AND YOUR DAD. LETS GET THAT OUT OF THE WAY FIRST.

TO BE SPECIFIC, YOUR MOM- SORRY, *THE EMPRESS*, SYMBOLIZES FECUNDITY, BEAUTY AND THE CREATIVE ENERGY OF MOTHER NATURE. SHE PROVIDES NOURISHMENT AND SECURITY. BLOBERTA, WHILE HER TALENTS ARE STIFLED, IS NEVER WITHOUT A SONG TO SING, NO MATTER WHO THE VICTIMS IN THE VICINITY MIGHT BE.



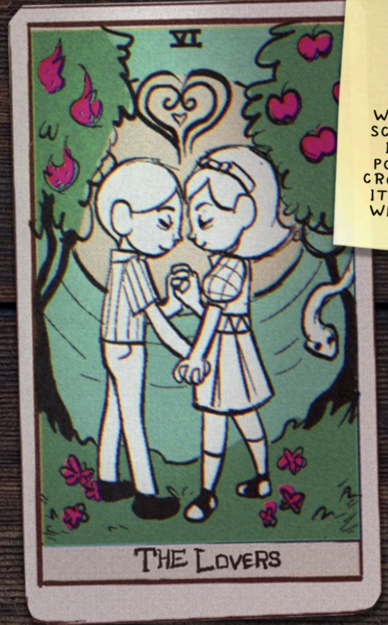
THE EMPEROR IS A MAN WITH AUTHORITY AND POWER, OFTEN A PLACEHOLDER FOR THE READER'S FATHER. IN THIS CASE IT'S CLAY. GETTING A READING WITH THE EMPEROR IN IT OFTEN SYMBOLIZES THE NEED FOR ORDER AND DISCIPLINE IN ONES LIFE.

USUALLY THERE IS AN APPLE IN THE CARD SOMEWHERE, SO I DREW A TINY LITTLE ONE ON THE BOTTLE OF BOOZE ON HIS DESK. YOU'D THINK THIS GUY HATES HIS JOB OR SOMETHING.



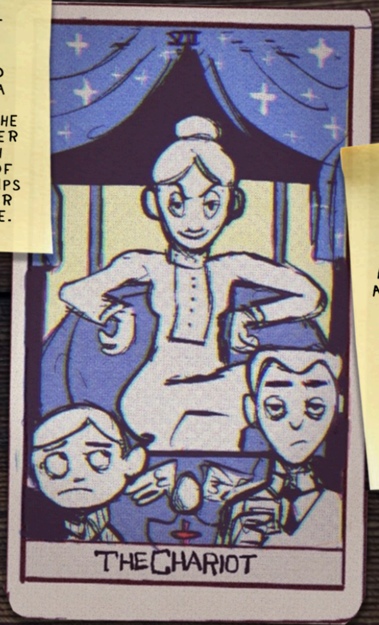
IT WOULD BE TOO EASY TO MAKE MISS SCULPTHAM OR EVEN PUTTY THE HIEROPHANT, SO I TOOK THIS ONE IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. DOUGHY LATCHKEY IS DEFINED BY WHAT LACKS HE, WHICH IS A CONSISTENT, CARING TEACHER OR MENTOR TO TRANSFER SACRED KNOWLEDGE TO HIM.

THE HIEROPHANT SUGGESTS THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHED TRADITIONS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES, SUCH AS THE INSTITUTE OF MARRIAGE.



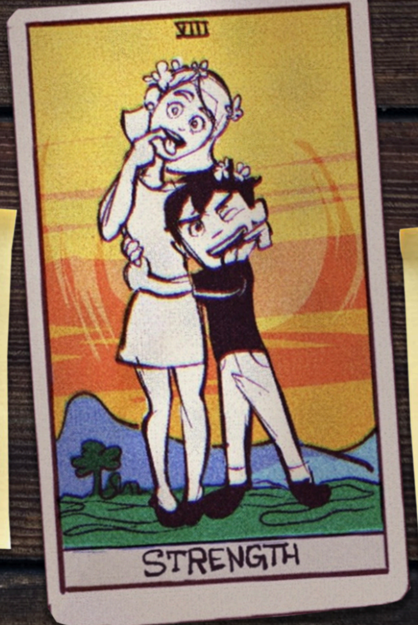
THE LOVERS IS AN INNOCENT CARD. ADAM AND EVE STAND IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, FLANKED ON ONE SIDE BY THE TREE OF LIFE, AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE ON THE OTHER. THE SERPANT POKES HIS HEAD OUT OF THE APPLE TREE.

THIS ONE NEEDED TO BE OREL AND CHRISTINA, SINCE THEIR LOVE IS A VERY PURE AND INNOCENT ONE, WITHOUT GUILE OR SELFISHNESS. THE SCENE IS OF THEM MEETING TOGETHER IN THE MOONLIGHT AT INSPIRATION POINT, AND SINCE THIS IS A CARD OF CROSSROADS AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS IT INVITES THE READER TO CONSIDER WHAT CHOICES THEY WANT TO MAKE.



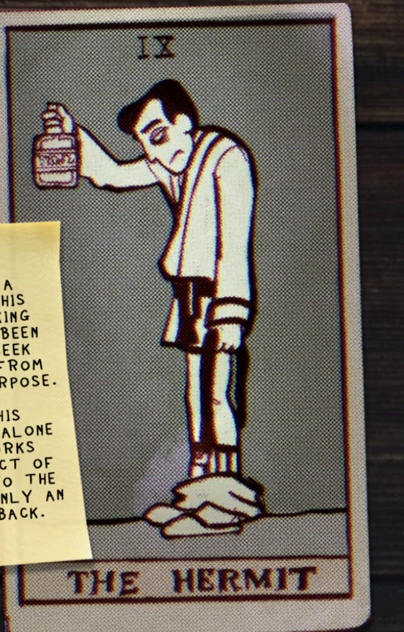
BY THE END (WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE MIDDLE) OF THE THIRD SEASON, MISS CENSORDOLL HAD BEGUN TO DRIVE THE NARRATIVE, AND STOPFRAME CEASED TO BE THE ANTAGONISTIC FORCE IN THE STORY. THE CHARIOT IS A FORCE THAT DRIVES EVENTS AND PUTS THEM INTO MOTION.

MY VERSION OF THE SPHINXES IN THE RIDER-WAITE CARD ARE OREL AND CLAY, SINCE SHE MANIPULATES THE TWO OF THEM TO HER NEFARIOUS ENDS.



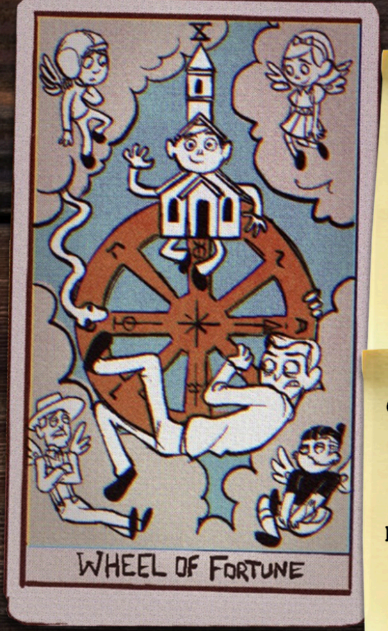
OF THE THREE VIRTUES, STRENGTH IS MY FAVORITE. I LOVE THE SYMBOLISM OF THE MAIDEN OPENING THE MOUTH OF THE LION WITH PATIENCE AND TENDERNESS. IT IS A CARD OF COURAGE, FORTITUDE AND OVERCOMING. THIS CARD SAYS YOU ARE STRONG ENOUGH. IT SAYS YOU CAN MASTER YOUR RAW EMOTIONS AND CALM THE BEAST IN YOU.

I LIKE TO THINK THAT JOE AND NURSE BENDY ARE AN APT COMPARISON TO THAT DYNAMIC.



THE HERMIT IS A CARD OF INTROSPECTION. CLAY SPENDS A LOT OF TIME WITHDRAWN TO HIS DETRIMENT, REGRETTING, DRINKING NAVAL-GAZING. IT COULD HAVE BEEN PUTTY, BUT PUTTY DOESN'T SEEK LONG STRETCHES OF SOLITUDE FROM THE NOISE OF THE WORLD ON PURPOSE.

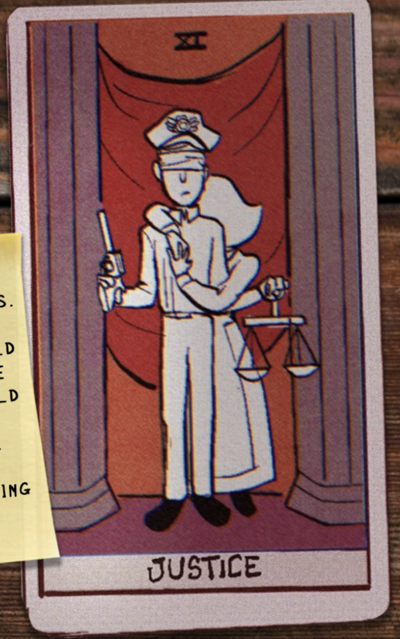
WHEN HE'S NOT ROTTING IN HIS STUDY, CLAY GOES OUT TO BE ALONE IN NATURE. HE DEFINITELY WORKS BETTER FOR THE SHADOW ASPECT OF THIS CARD, BECAUSE GAZING INTO THE ABYSS OF YOUR OWN SOUL IS ONLY AN INVITATION FOR IT TO GAZE BACK.

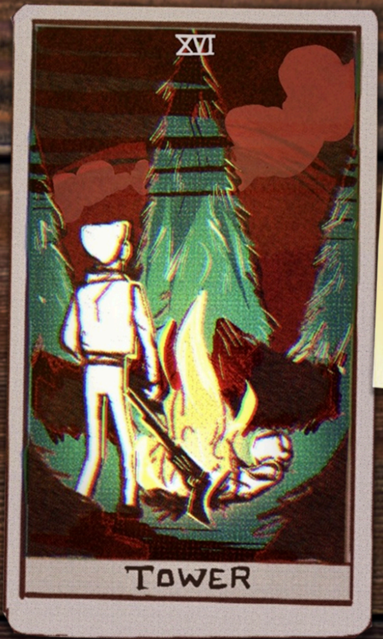


THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE REMINDS US THAT NOTHING IS PERMANENT AND THAT LIFE IS A CYCLE OF UPS AND DOWNS. IT IS ALSO CARD ABSOLUTELY LITTERED WITH SYMBOLISMS. I REPLACED THE SPHINX WITH OREL IN HIS CHURCH OUTFIT

FOR OBVIOUS REASONS. CLAY TAKES THE PLACE OF ANUBIS, JACKAL-HEADED GOD OF DEATH. I'M NOT GONNA GO INTO EVERY CONVOLUTED SYMBOL BUT I WILL SAY THIS: WE HAVE TOMMY SYMBOLIZING REASON, CHRISTINA FOR ETERNITY, ARTHUR FOR SACRIFICE AND STEPHANIE FOR COURAGE.

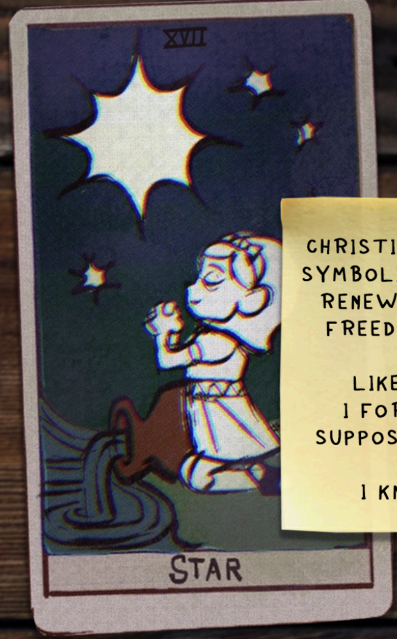
JUSTICE IS THE SECOND OF THE THREE VIRTUES, AND ITS ALL ABOUT LEARNING KARMIC LESSONS. BECAUSE THE SHOW NEVER GOT REAL JUSTICE I FIGURED I WOULD SYMBOLIZE THAT THROUGH THE SCRAPPED PLOTLINE THAT WOULD HAVE LIKELY IMPROVED ON BLOBERTA'S CHARACTER ARC. I ALSO PUT A BLINDFOLD ON PAPERMOUTH DUE TO HIS BUMBLING NATURE, I JUST THOUGHT IT WOULD BE IN CHARACTER.





IF THERE WAS EVER A TOWER MOMENT IN THE SHOW, IT WAS NATURE II. THIS IS AN EVENT THAT TOPPLES THE STATUS QUO AND CHANGES EVERYTHING.

IN THIS INTERPRETATION, OREL HIMSELF IS THE TOWER THAT IS FELLED.

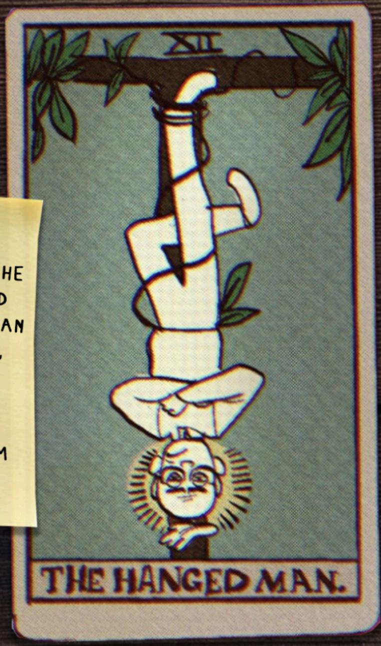


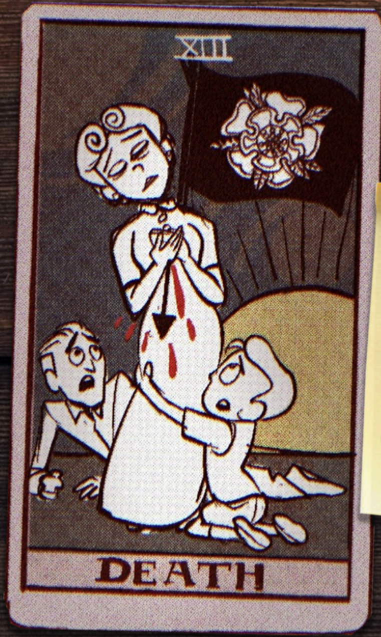
CHRISTINA IS THE STAR. SHE SYMBOLIZES, TO OREL, HOPE, RENEWAL, FAITH, AND THE FREEDOM TO BE HIMSELF.

LIKE A STUPID IDIOT I FORGOT THERE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AN IBIS IN THIS CARD.
I KNOW RIGHT!!!!!!!

AS A CHARACTER, PUTTY NEEDS TO CHANGE THE WAY HE LOOKS AT THE WORLD, AND THAT'S WHAT THE HANGED MAN IS ALL ABOUT: SURRENDER, NEW PERSPECTIVES AND UNDERSTANDING.

I ALSO WANTED TO MAKE HIM DROP HIS TOUPEE.

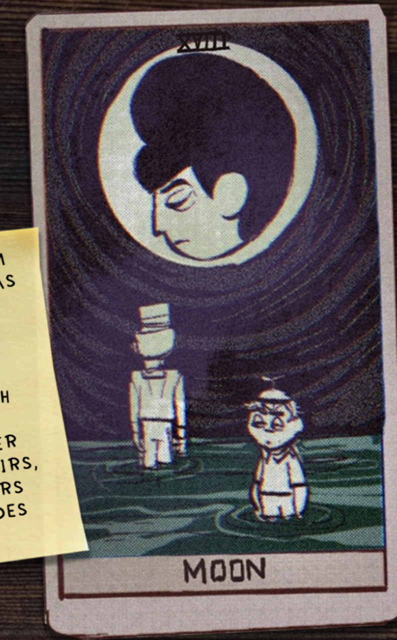




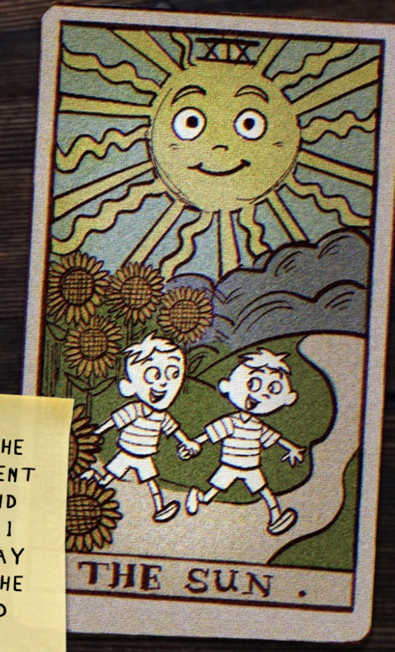
DEATH IS A CARD OF TRANSFORMATION AND RENEWAL, AND TRADITIONALLY IT POINTS TO REAPING WHAT YOU SOW. IN THE CASE OF CLAY AND HIS MOTHER IT WAS A MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION, BUT ULTIMATELY ONE MUST CLOSE ONE DOOR TO OPEN ANOTHER.

LIKE THE MOON, MISS SCULPTHAM CONCEALS HIDDEN TRUTHS AND HAS A DARK SIDE TO HER. SHE IS PRIVY TO MYSTICAL AND TERRIFYING REALITIES.

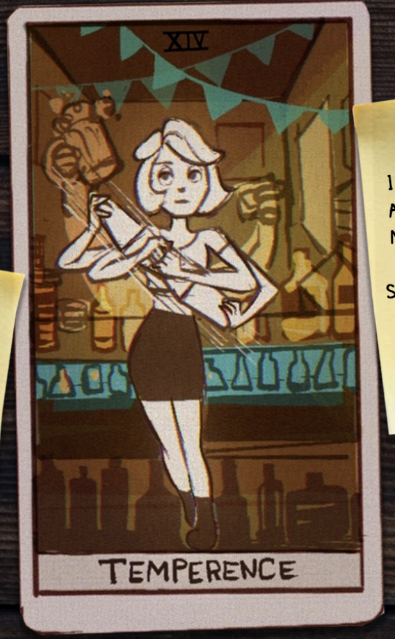
THE MOON IS CONCERNED WITH ILLUSION, CONFUSION AND SECRETS, ALL PRESENT IN HER STRANGE AND PERVERSE AFFAIRS, ILLUSTRATED IN THE DANGERS LURKING IN THE PSYCHIC TIDES BENEATH HER.



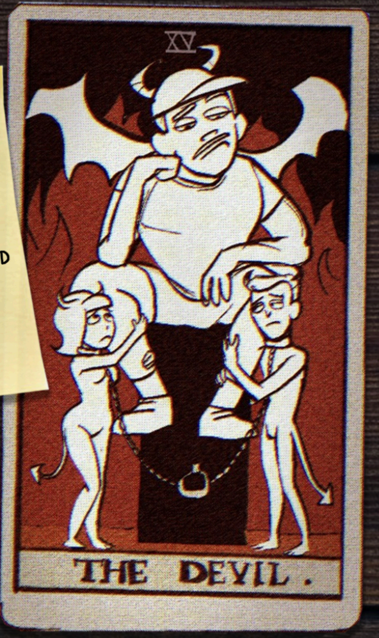
THE SUN REPRESENTS THE JOY OF BEING IN ALIGNMENT WITH YOUR TRUEST AND MOST SPIRITUAL SELF. I ALSO LIKE THE WORDPLAY OF SUN/SON, SO I MADE THE SUBJECTS OF THIS CARD THE SONS IN THE SHOW (SHAPEY BLOCK AND OREL (IN THE SUN))

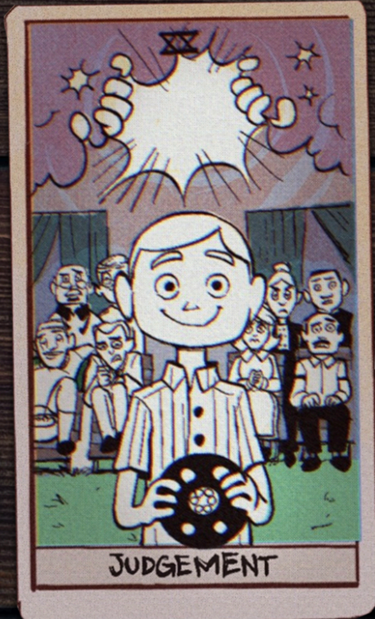


I KNOW DOLLY ONLY REALLY APPEARED IN ONE EPISODE BUT BY GOLLY, MISS DOLLY... SHE INJECTS A VOICE OF REASON AND MODERATION INTO THE BAR ROOM, TEMPERING THE VOLATILE EMOTIONS SURROUNDING HER. EXISTING BETWEEN WET AND DRY LAND (SOBER AMONG DRUNKS) SHE REMAINS CALM IN MOMENTS OF STRESS.

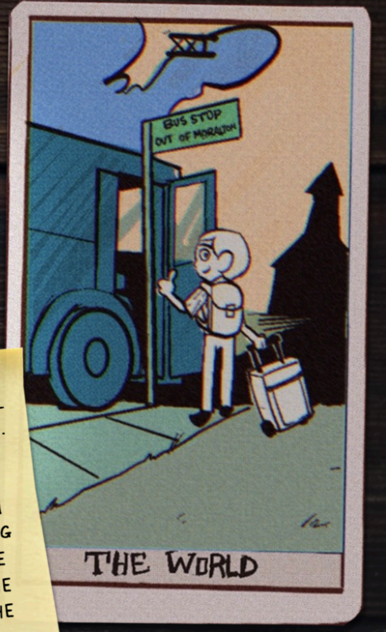


THE DEVIL IS ABOUT ADDICTION. OTHER WORDS INCLUDE BONDAGE, OBSESSION AND BEING A SLAVE TO YOUR MATERIAL EARTHLY DESIRES. CLAY, BLOBERTA AND STOPFRAME ALL EXHIBIT WILD OBSESSIONS, AND EXPERIENCE FEELINGS OF ENTRAPMENT, EMPTINESS AND LACK OF FULFILLMENT

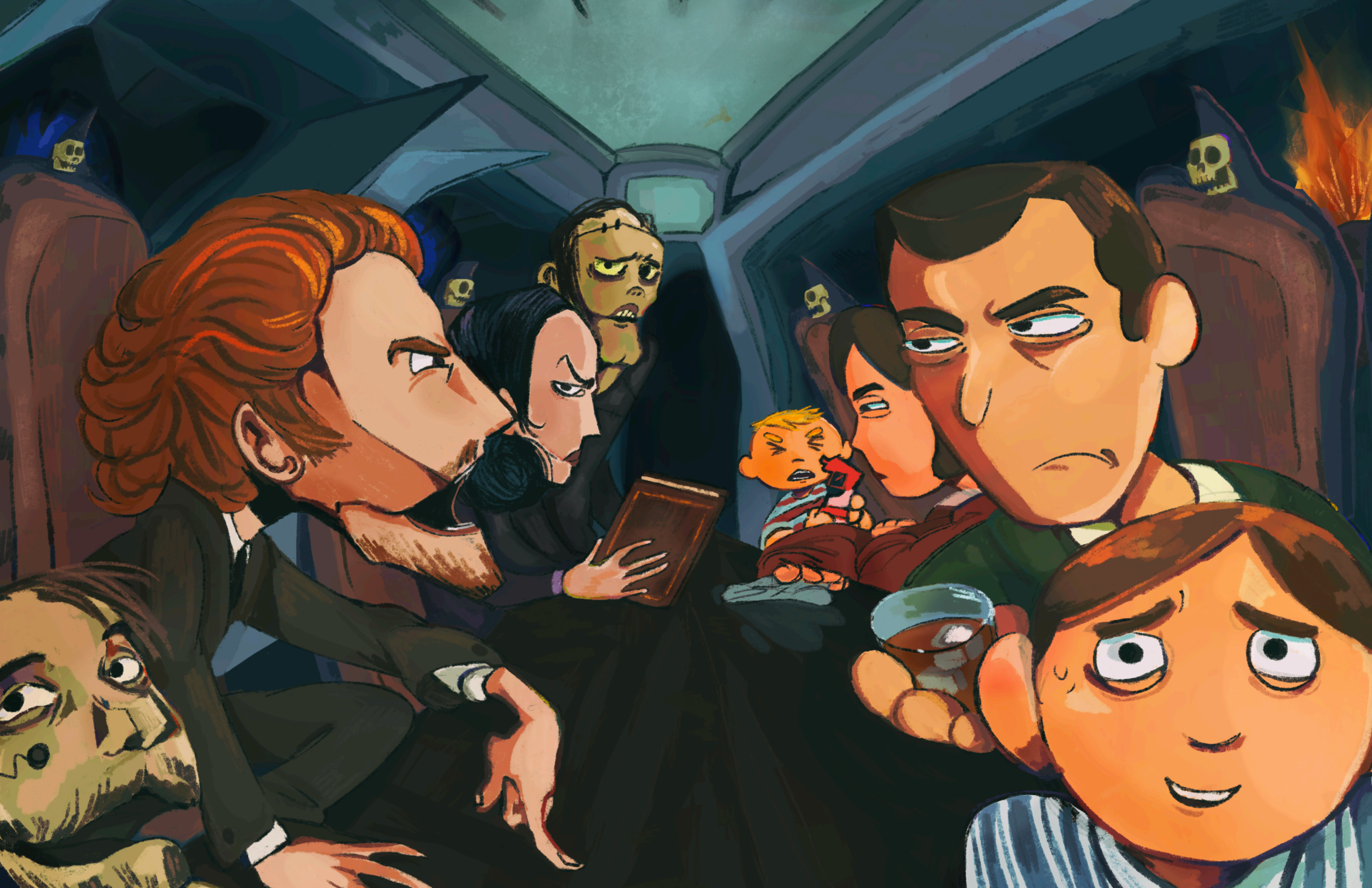




OREL'S MOVIE PREMIERE CAN BE READ AS THE END OF THE FUN, CAREFREE PHASE OF THE SHOW AS WELL AS THE HALCYON DAYS OF HIS CHILDHOOD.
THE JUDGEMENT CARD IS ONE OF AWAKENING, RECKONING AND PURPOSE. ALSO NOTHING GETS PEOPLE JUDGING YOU LIKE SHOWING THEM YOUR ART.

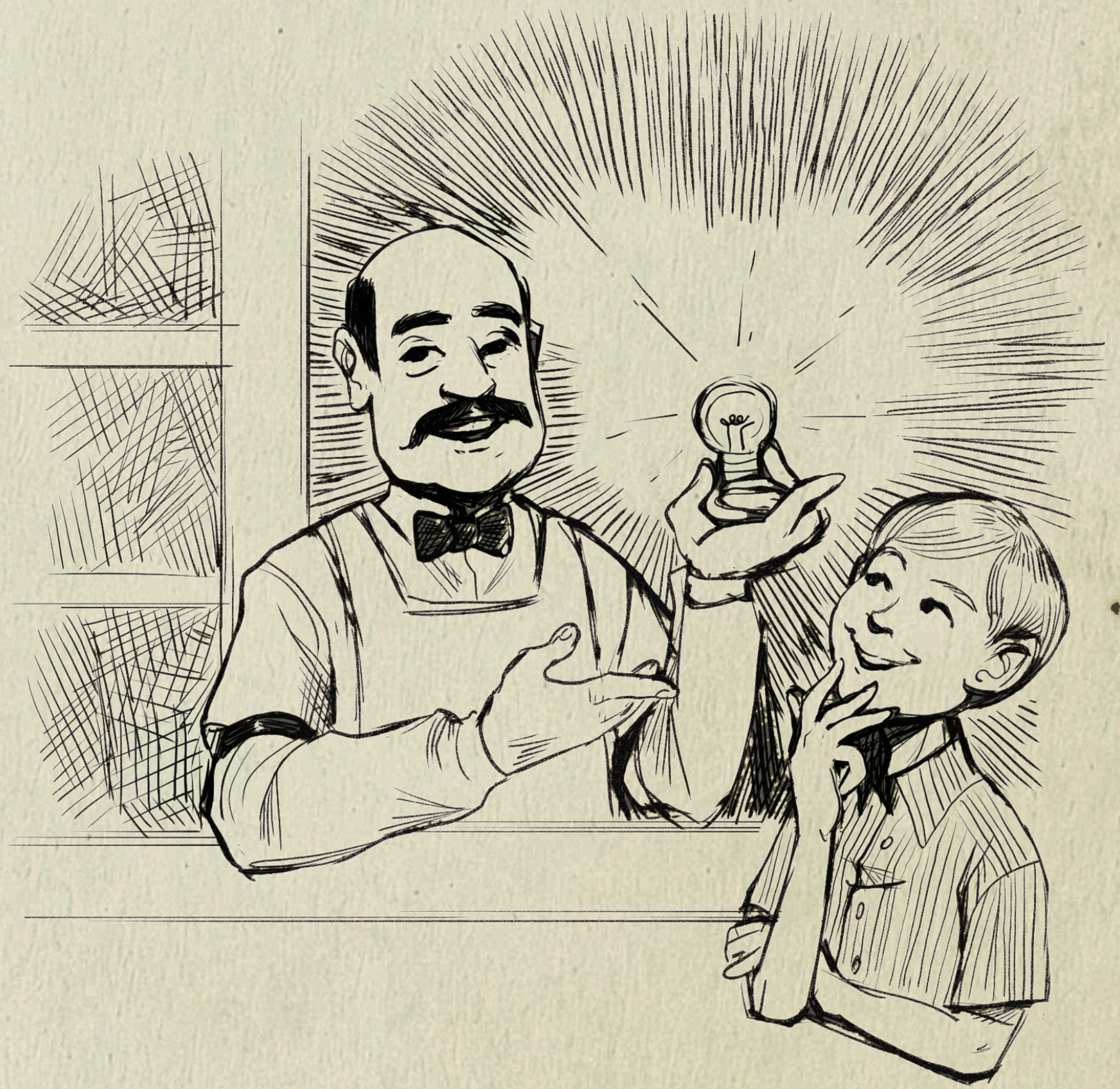


THE WORLD IS WHERE THE FOOL MEETS THE END OF HIS JOURNEY. IT IS ALSO INSPIRED BY THE INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT WHERE OREL TRAVELS THE WORLD, I THINK THAT'S A FITTING ENDING FOR HIS CHARACTER, FOR THE WORLD IS HIS OYSTER, AND HE THE I DON'T KNOW THIS IS THE END GOODBYE



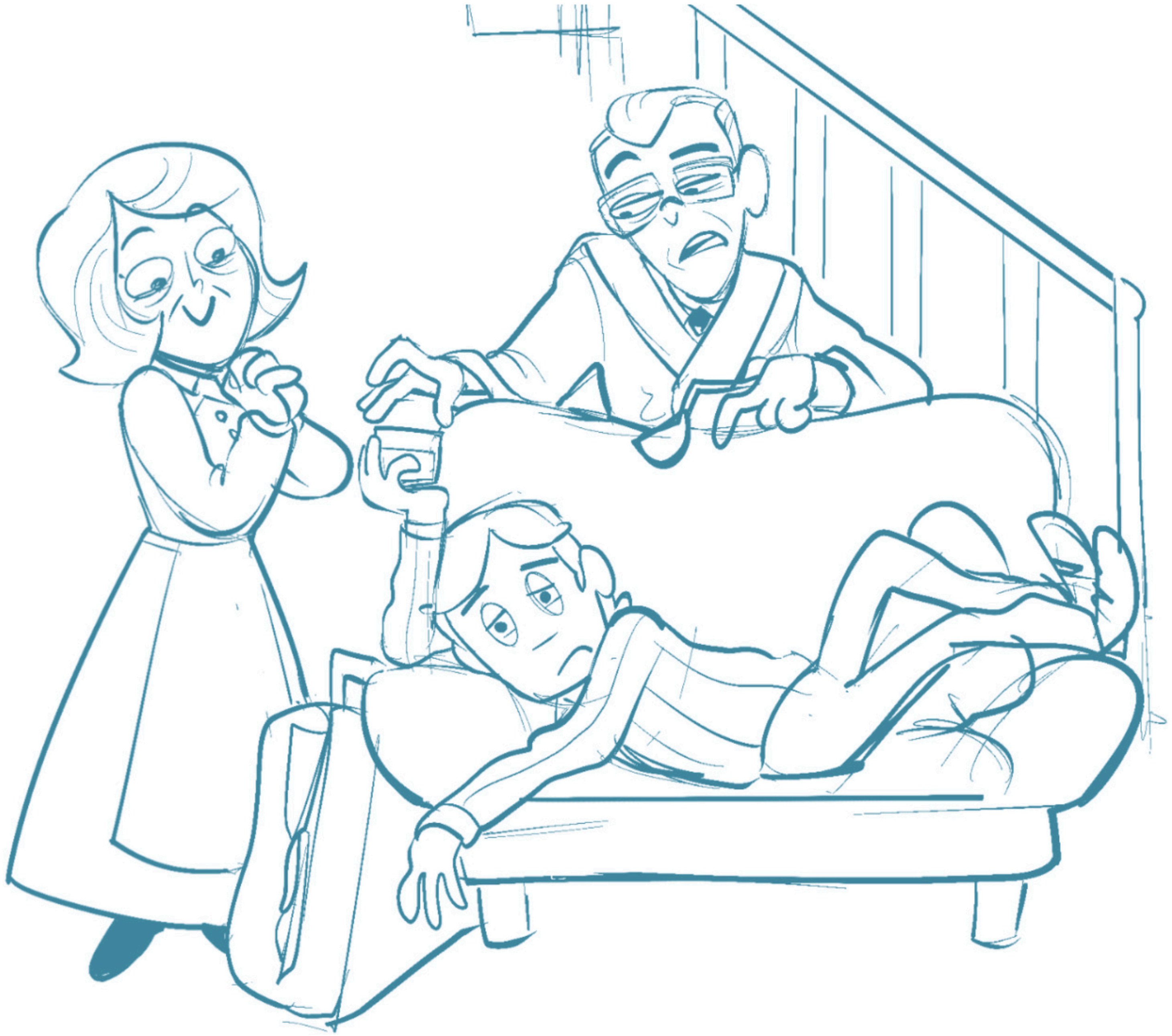
Spic and Span

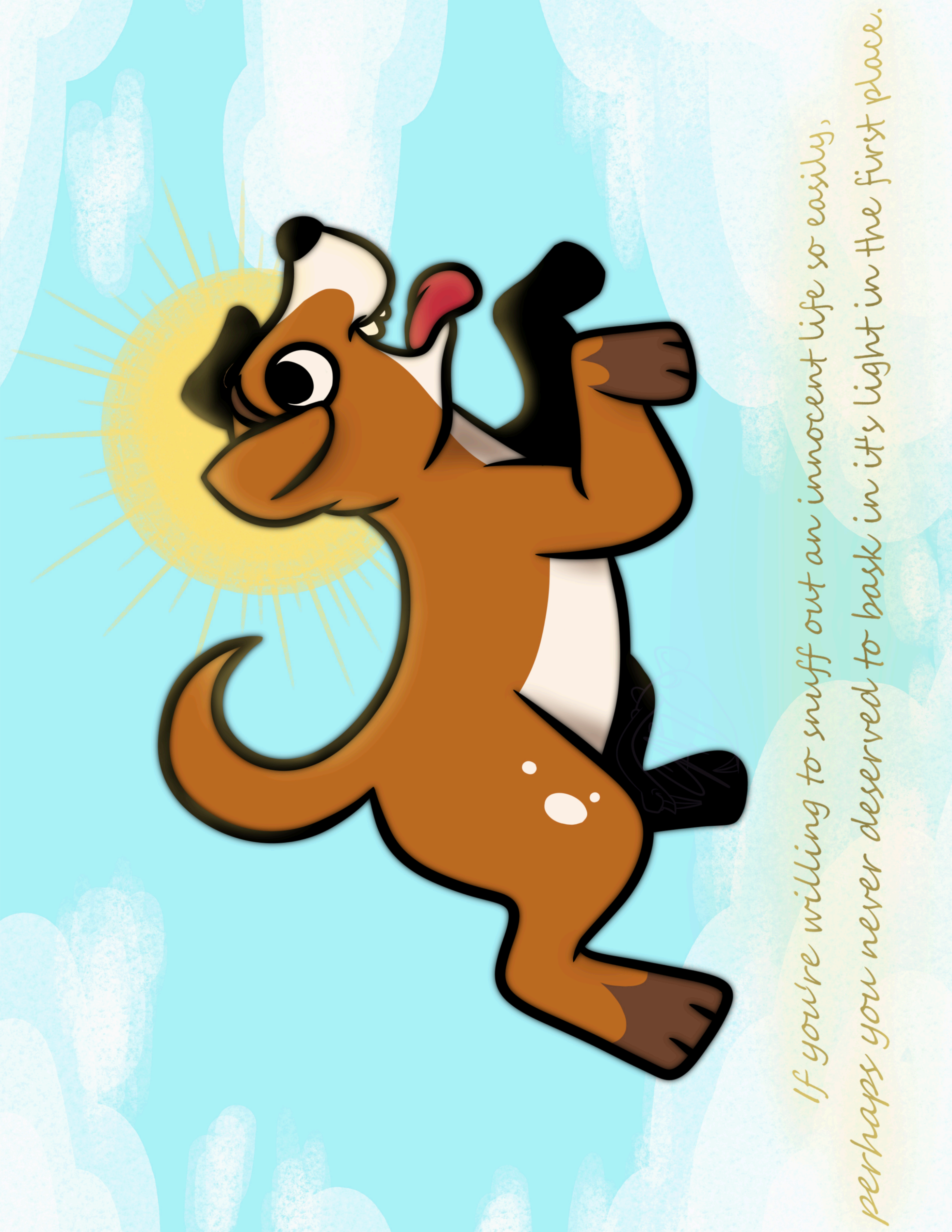
EMISSION



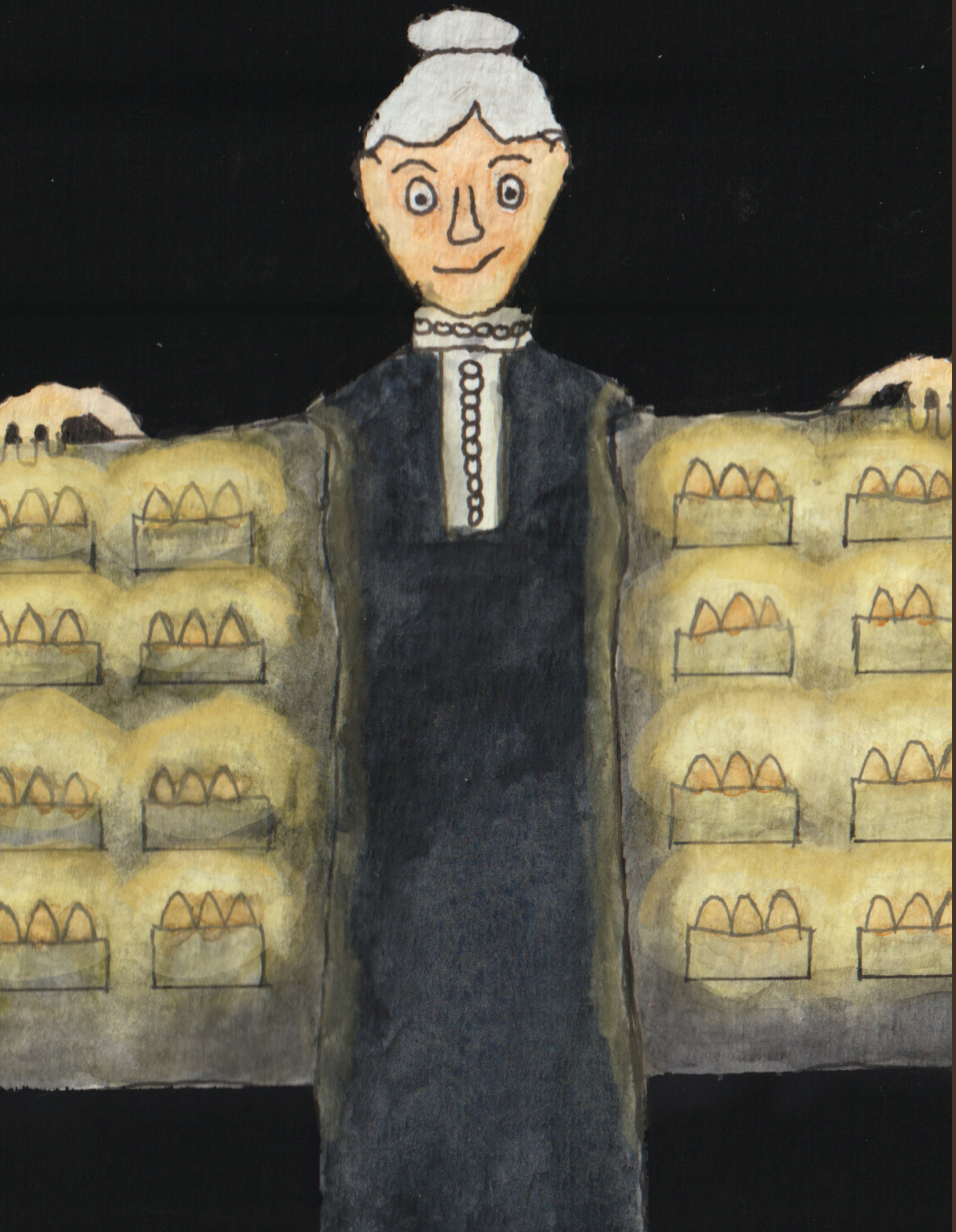
radiation • ejection • shedding • flow • diffusion • venting

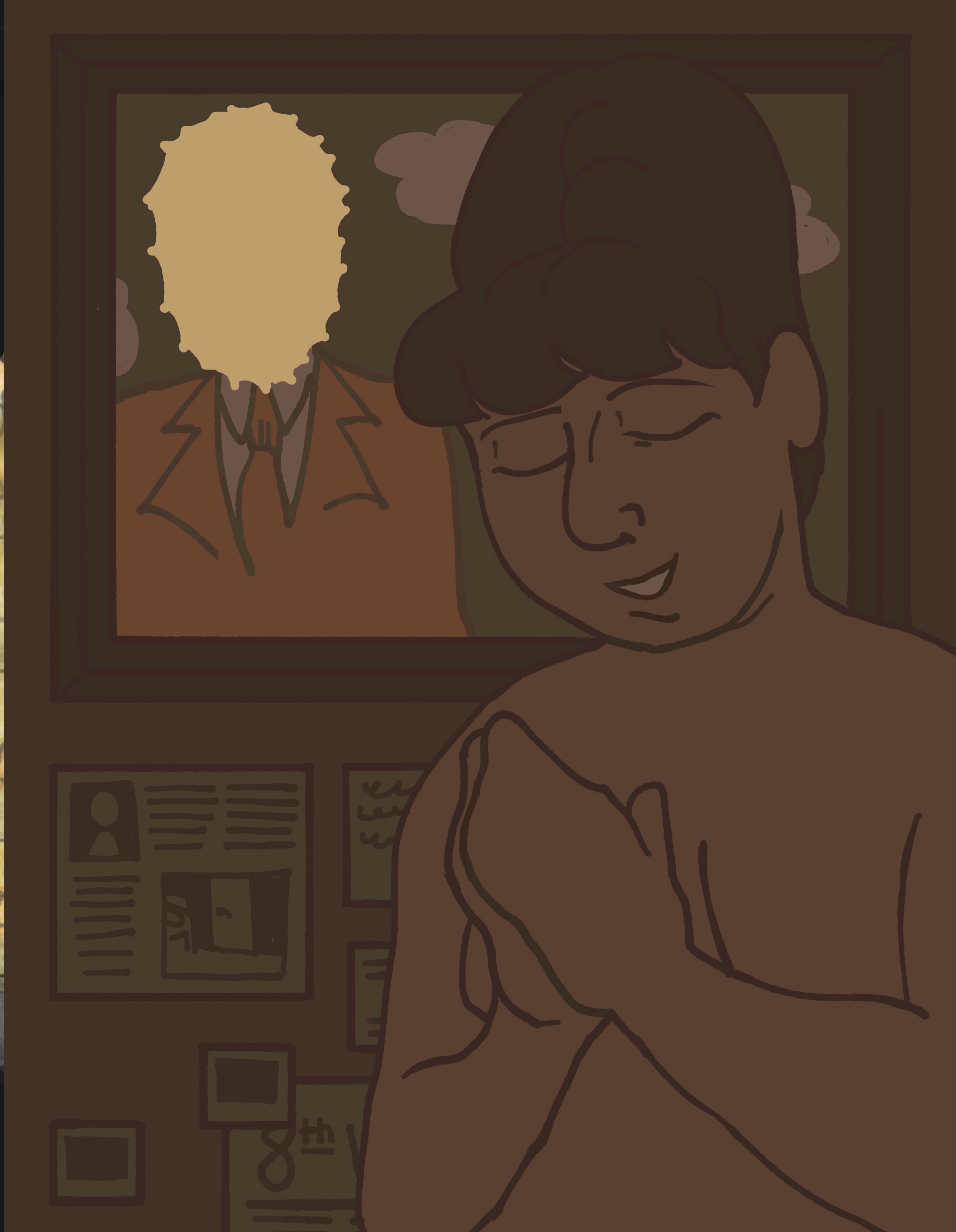
Sad Story Hour



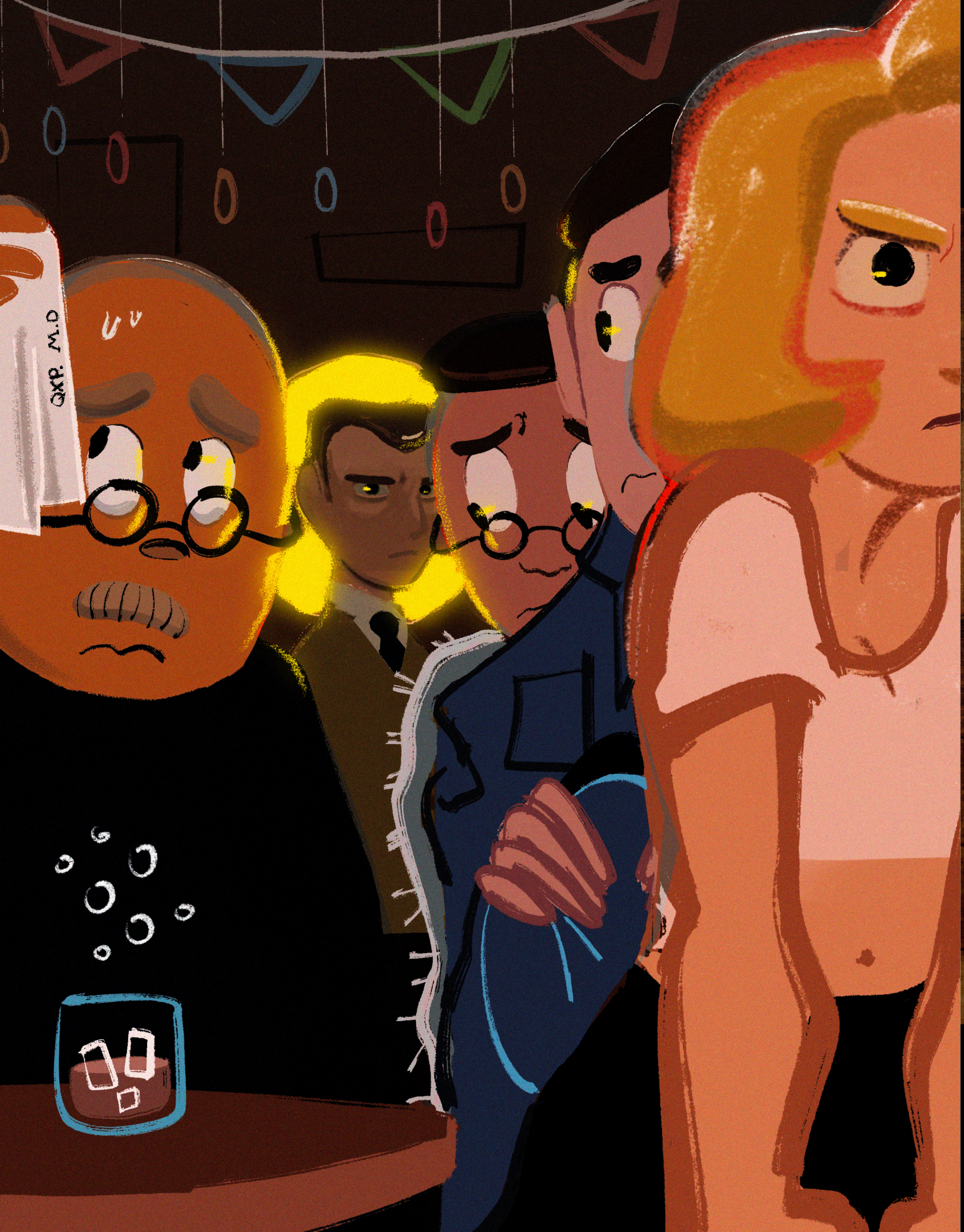


If you're willing to snuff out an innocent life so easily,
perhaps you never deserved to bask in it's light in the first place.

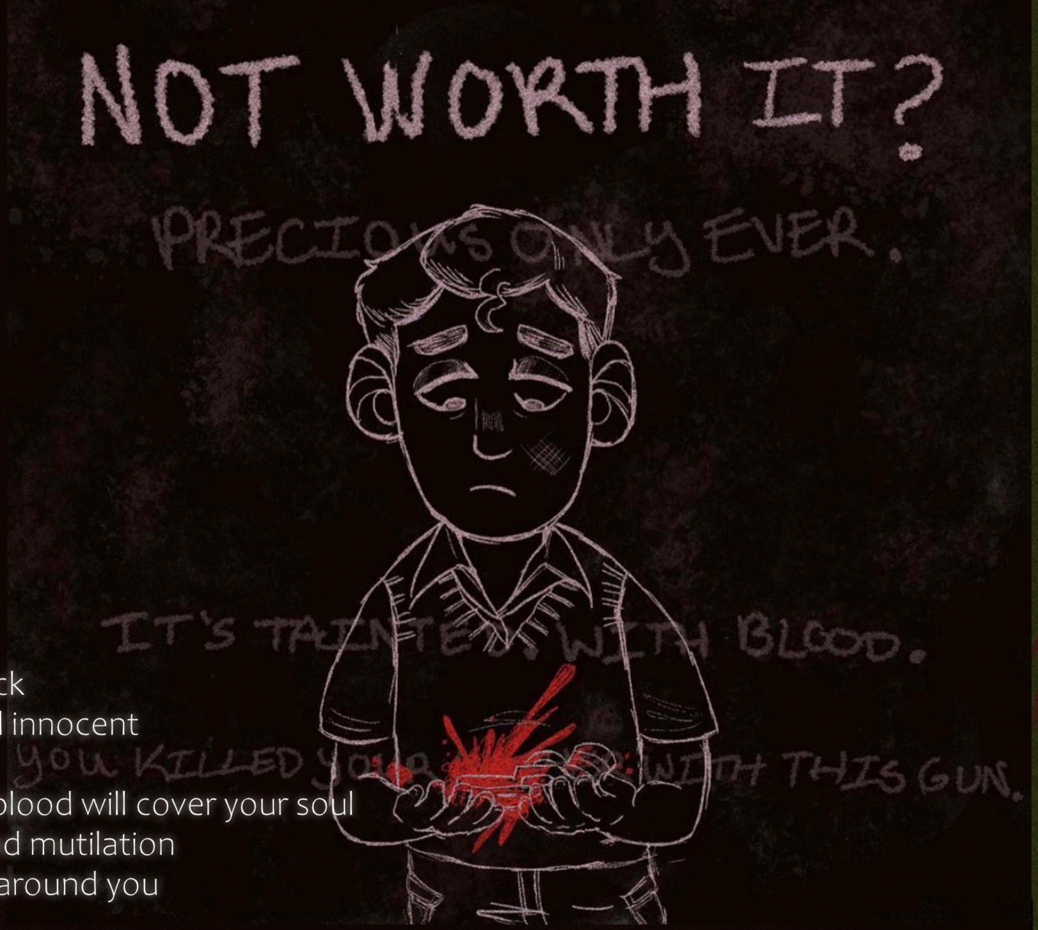




8th

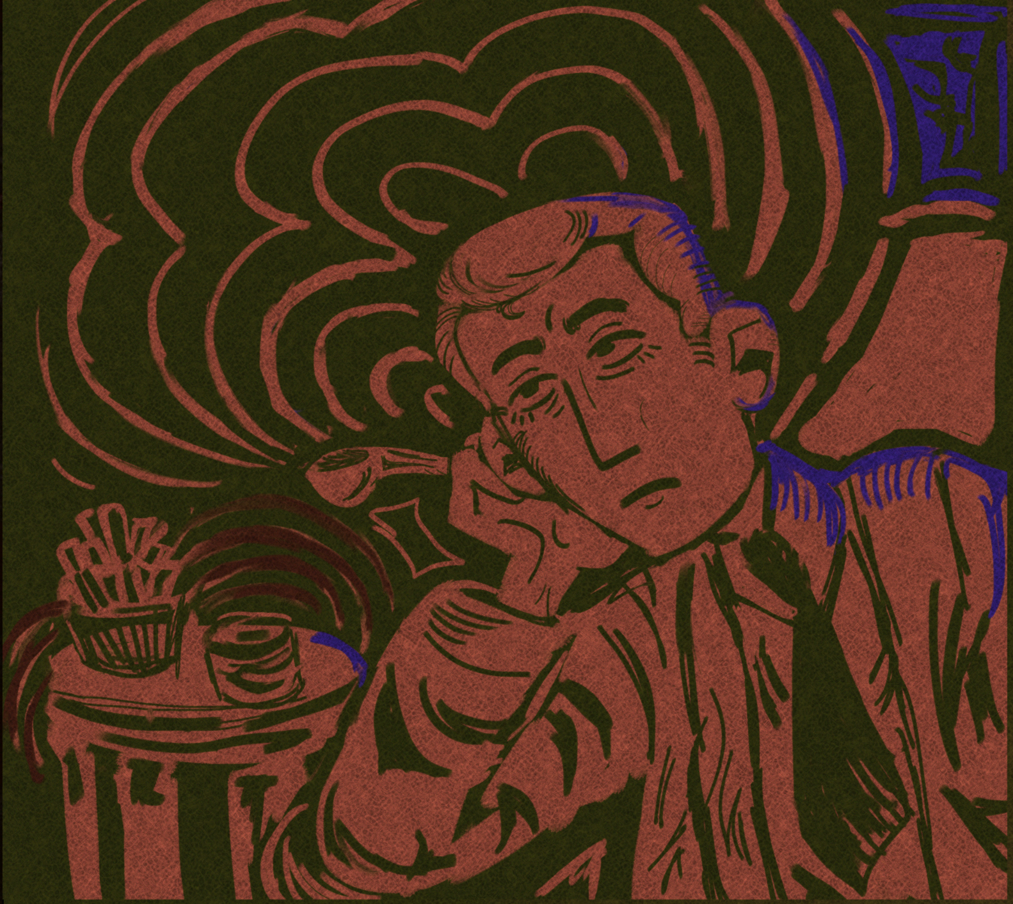

QXP. M.D

DARK LORD MAKE MY RUNNERS WI
TRACK


NOT WORTH IT?
PRECIOUS ONLY EVER.
IT'S TAINTED WITH BLOOD.
YOU KILLED YOUR [illegible] WITH THIS GUN.

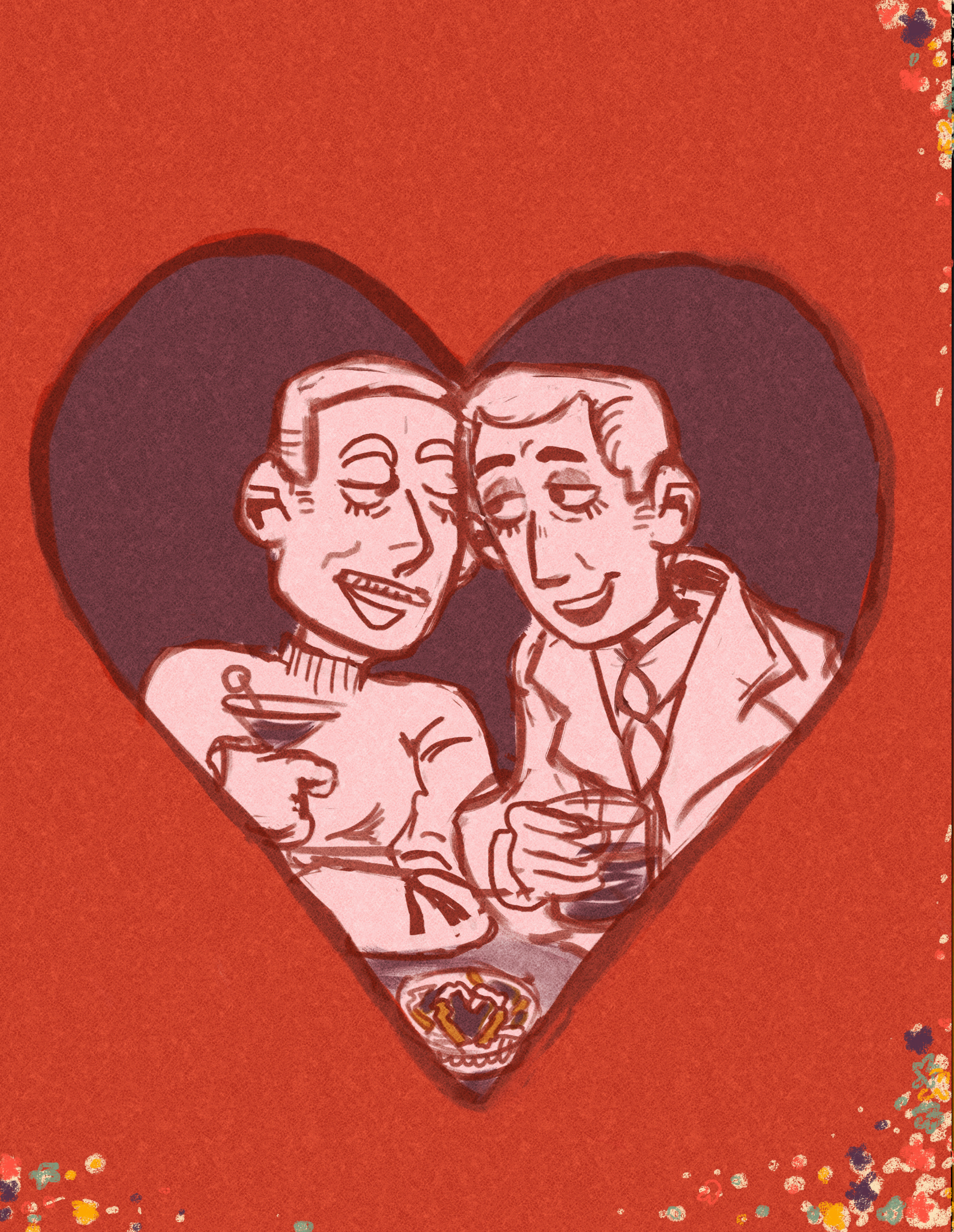
MAN
BY: LUCY

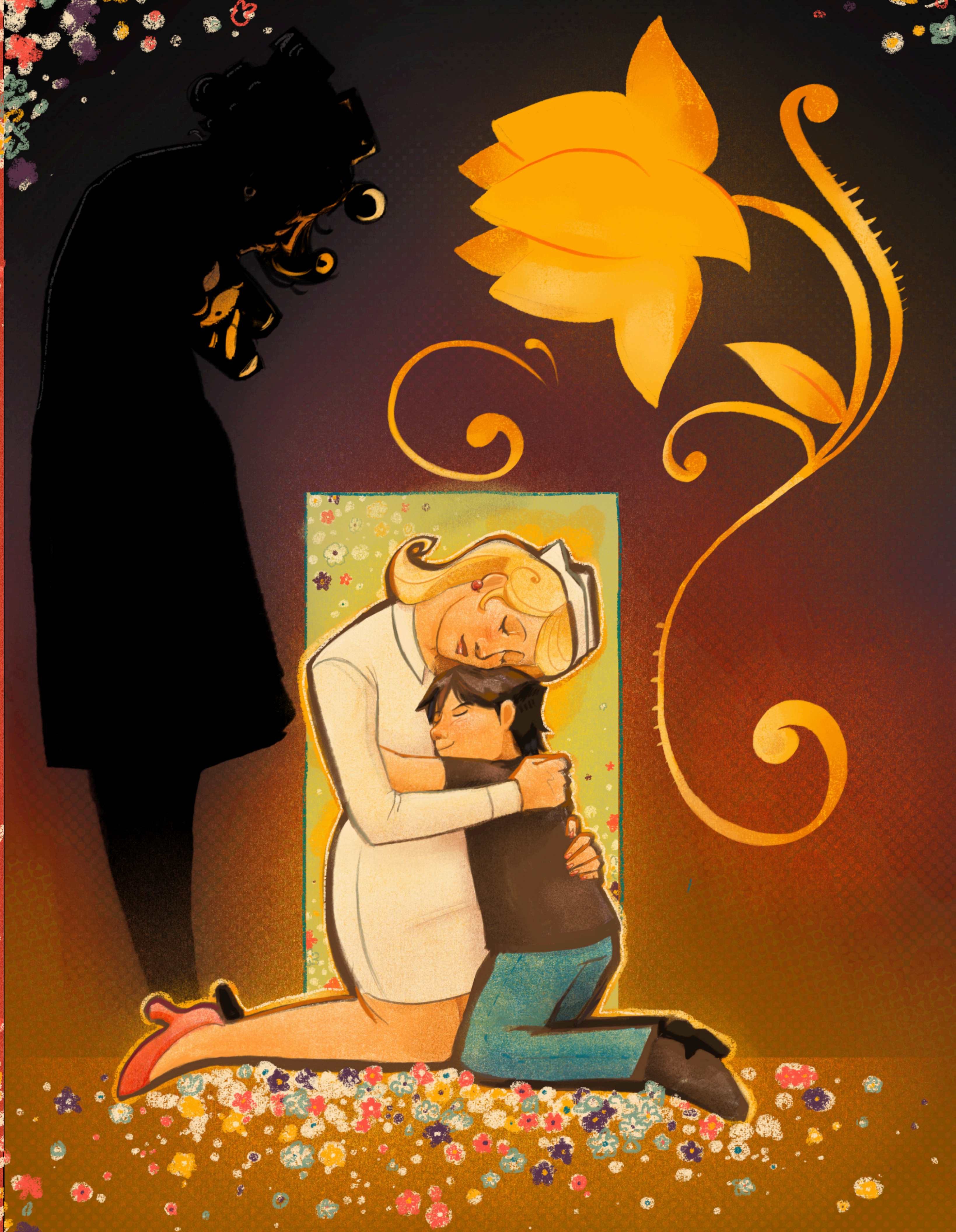
The barrel circles and rattles with a click
You'll look in the eyes of the small and innocent
The weak
You'll let go of your fingers and soon blood will cover your soul
The delicious feeling of destruction and mutilation
The delicious feeling of hurting those around you
Those who are weak and moldable
Those who cower on their knees
They'll develop bruises so deep they will stain forever
You would know
As your knees still ache every time you try to bend down
To remind you of the life you lived before
Cowering under the fist of a man
A little boy with no muscle on his heart
A boy who spoke of only kindness
But kindness isn't the words spoken by god
Your angelic features speak of sin
Your smile it shows you're a faggot
You'll grow old and remain a boy
As you crawl on the knees of submissiveness and weakness you will rot in the grave of the feminine
But you stood up
You took one sip of that sick poison and learned that only man will make it
Only war will persevere in heaven
You shot those around you
Using the same bullets you removed from your own heart
Hurting and abusing others is evil
But evil survives
Evil holds the world up in the arm of men
Evil is the purest form of heaven out there
Evil is godly
Evil is you
You are man
You are god
And he is just a boy

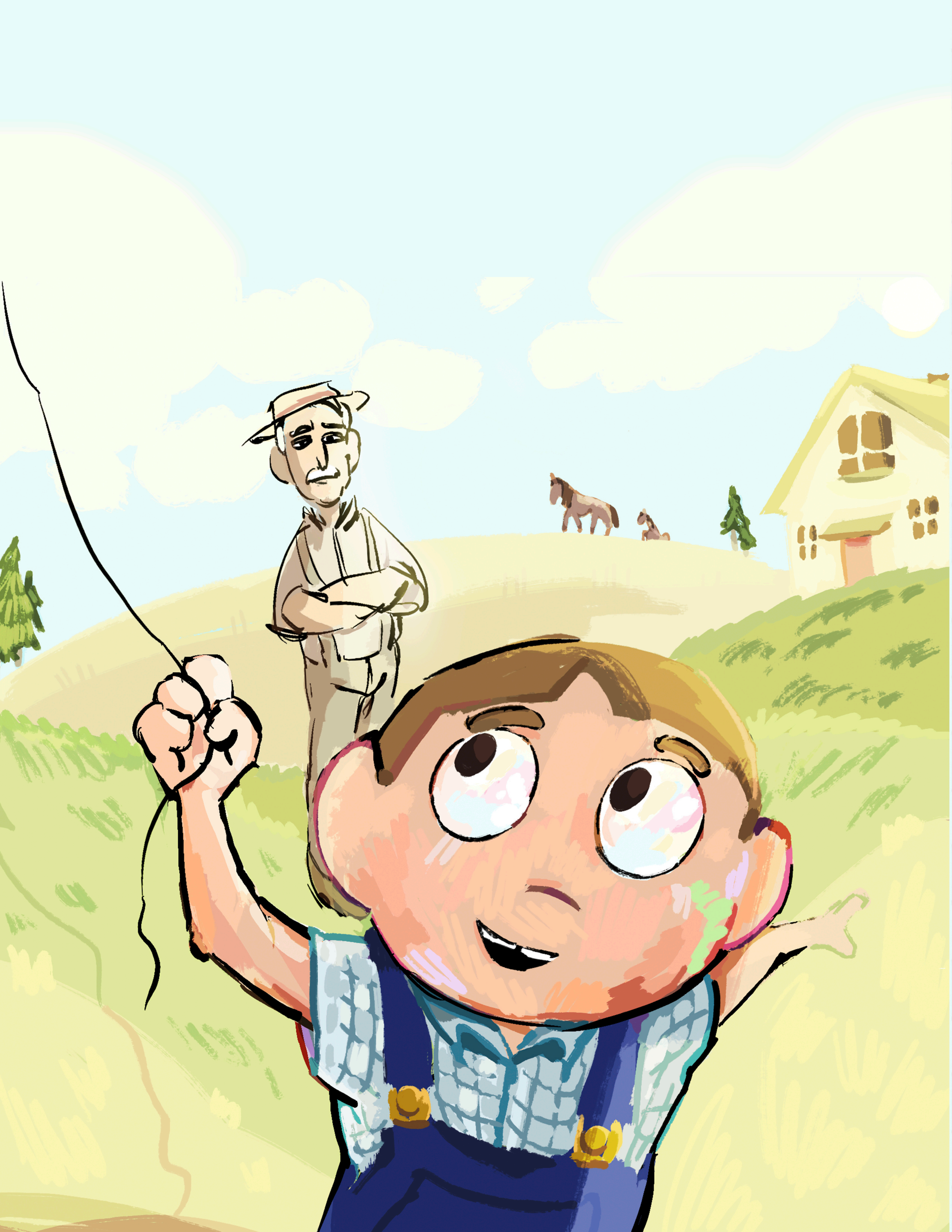


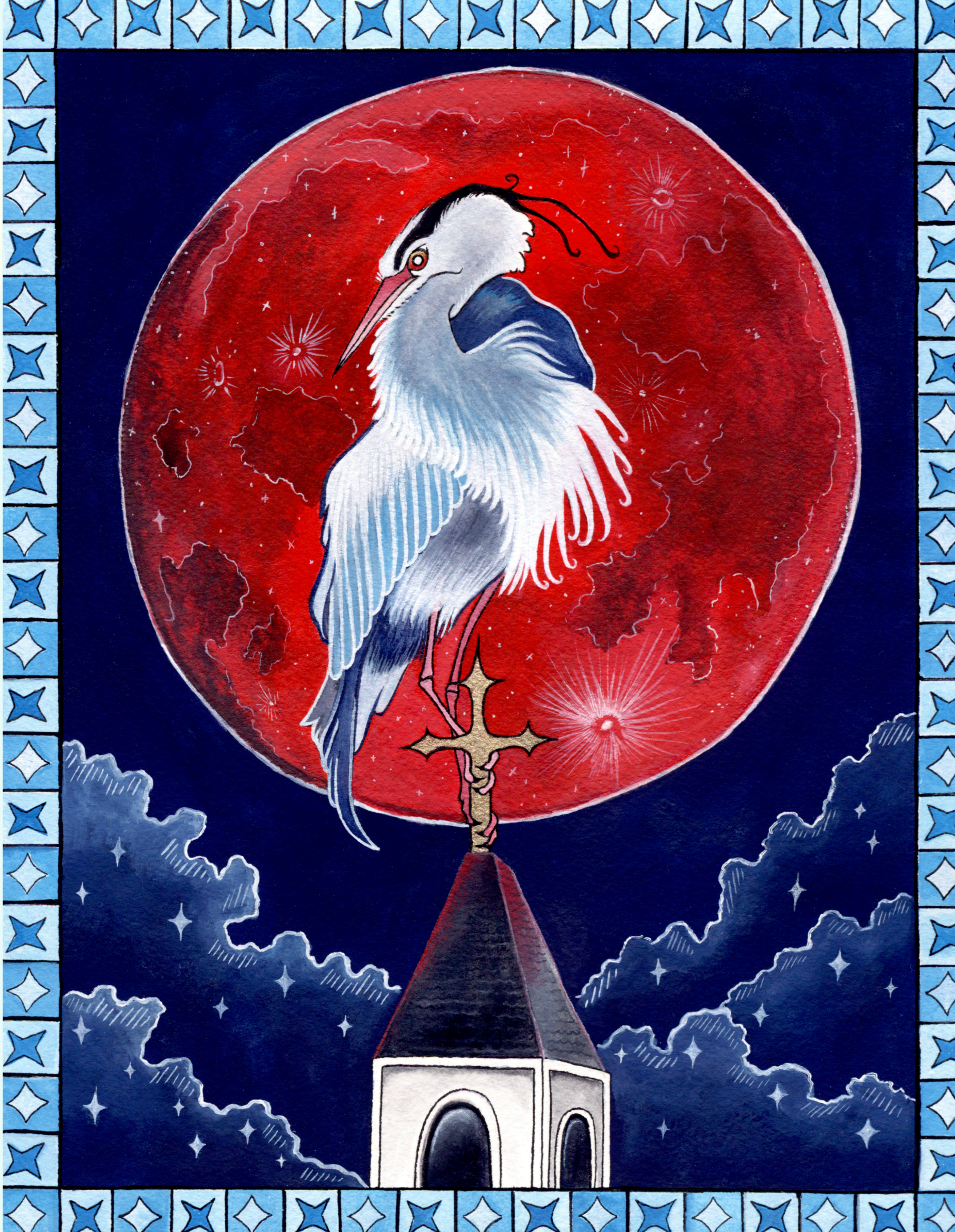
SACRIFICE
BY: LUCY

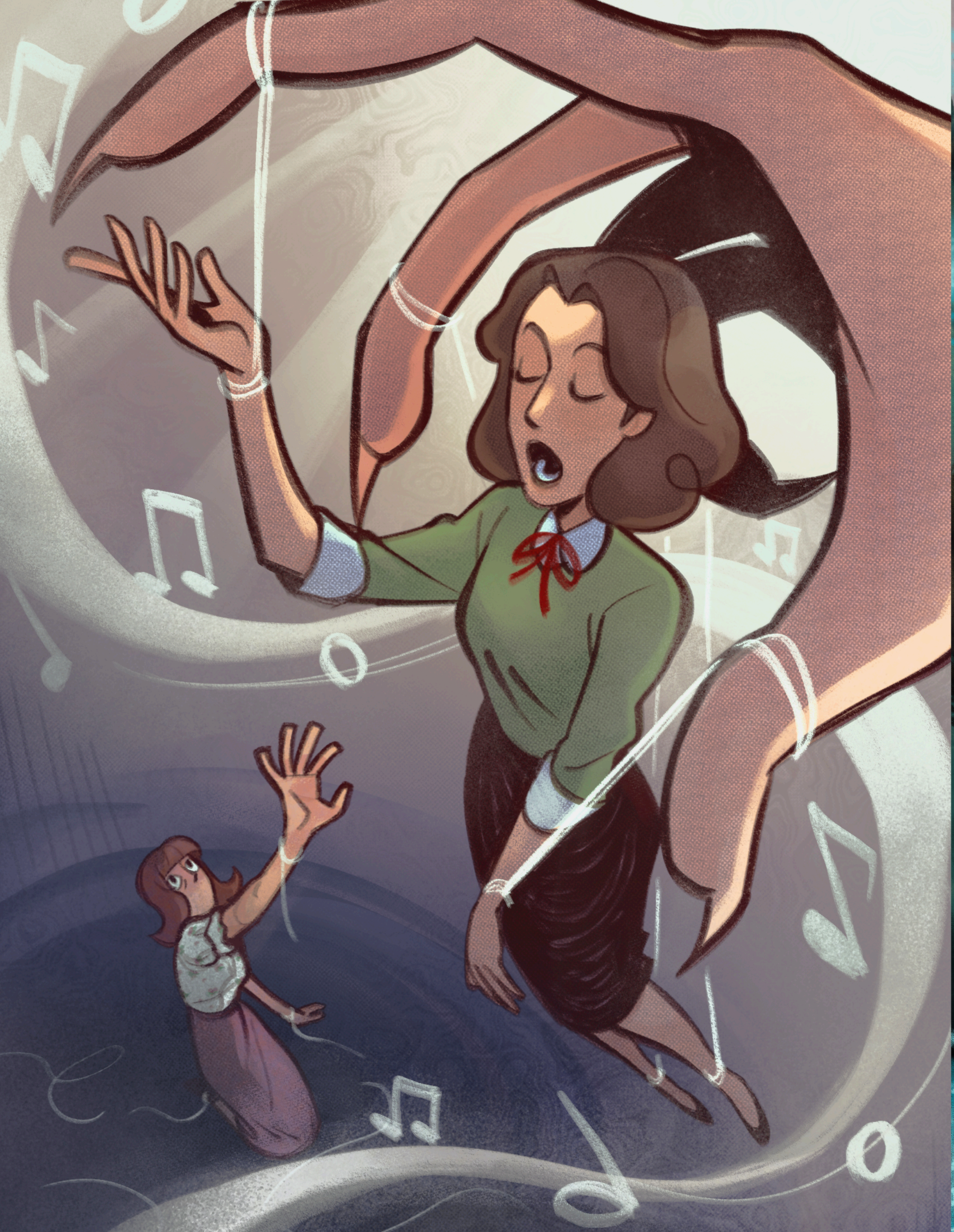
Your life doesn't stop at death.
Your life stops once you give it to another
Energy never decreases or increases
When life is made life has to die
And energy can only be stolen from the sweet liquor filled kiss of mating
As life grows and builds it sucks and weighs
Once it can breathe on its own you'll stop knowing how to yourself
You won't go anywhere
You'll rot in your pit of the nest that you made
She doesn't want you to leave
She wants your life to fix hers
She wants to suck you dry to fill up the hole in her stomach
She'll blame you for being empty
For the wine oozing out your wound that she bit into
Your wings will be cut off and your feathers will be used to help her fly
And to help the mini version of you created from the life you used to have
You used to dance
To move in rhyme
Now you cant even sit up straight
As the weight lowers you down to your knees
And you pray for the chance to restart
To dance again
To feel again
But nothing new can be made
The only way to get what you want is to steal
And sadly your parents didn't have much to take from

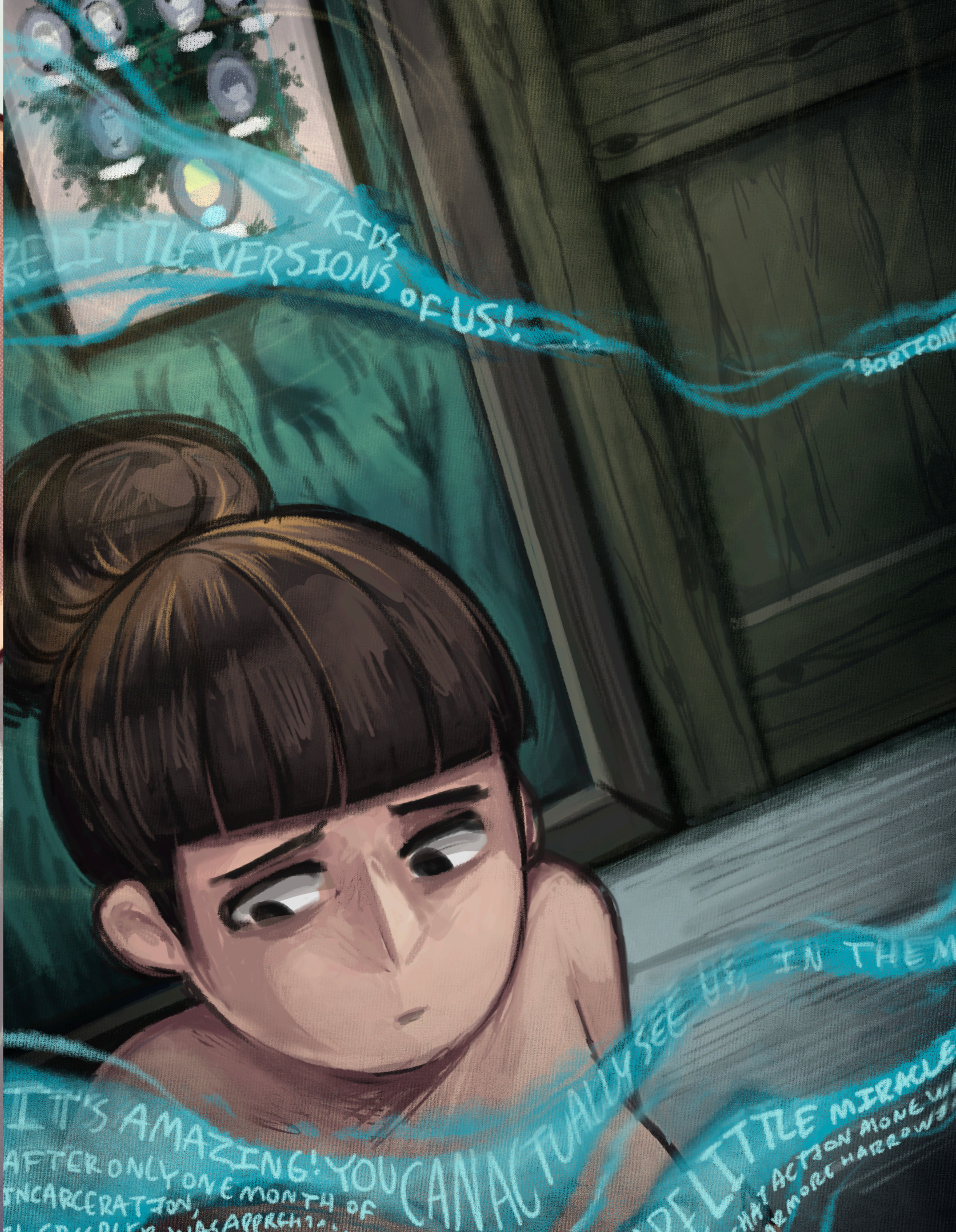


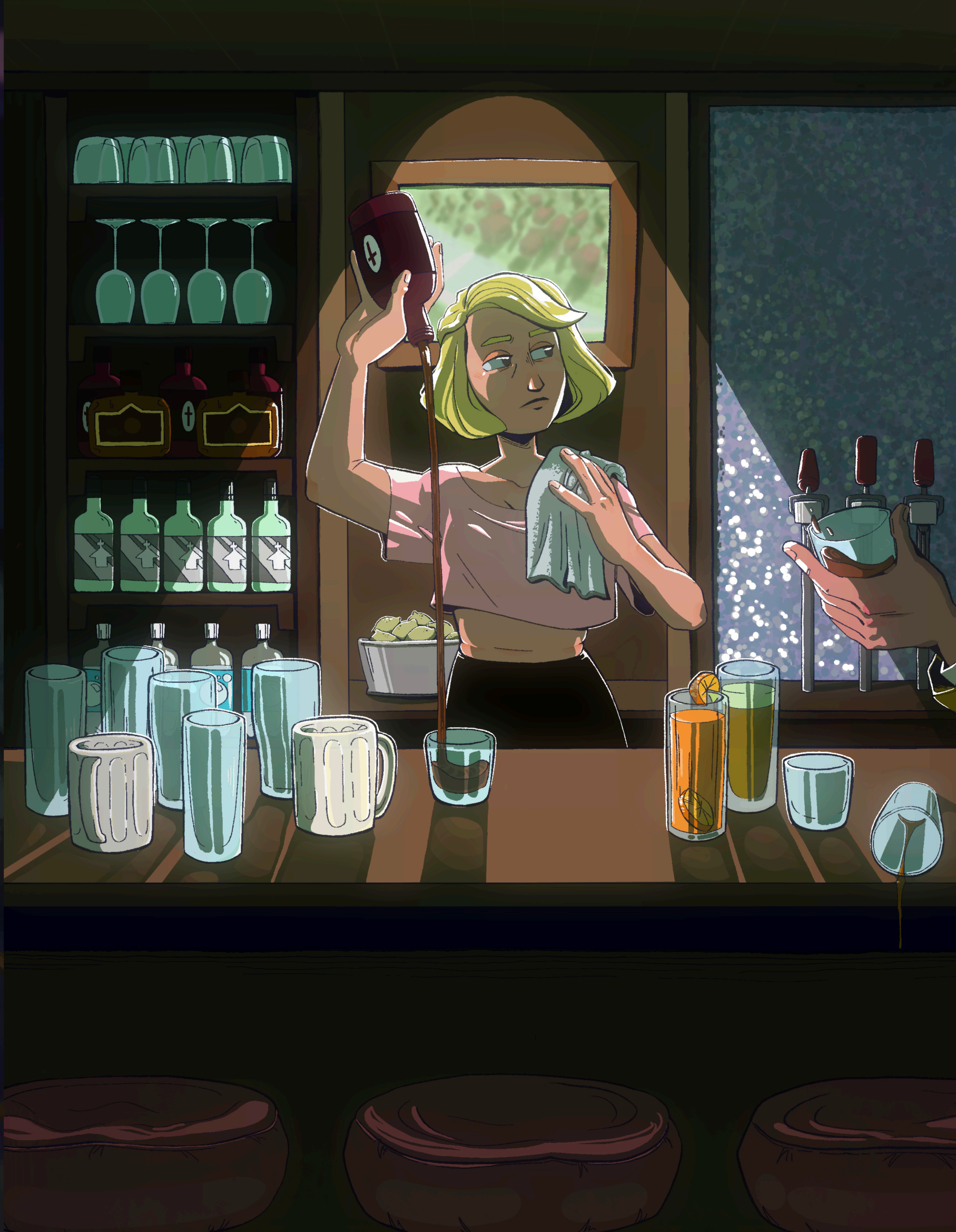


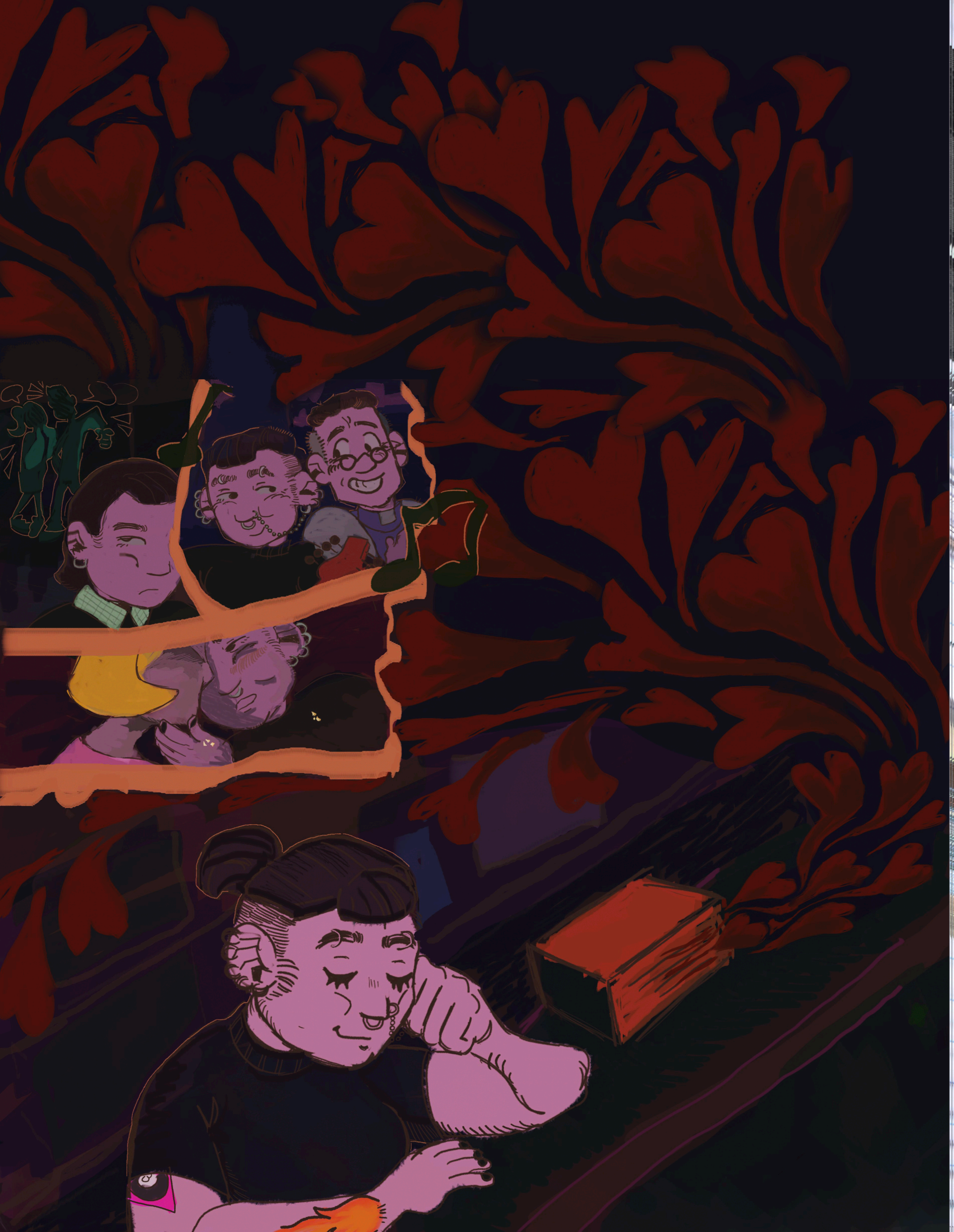


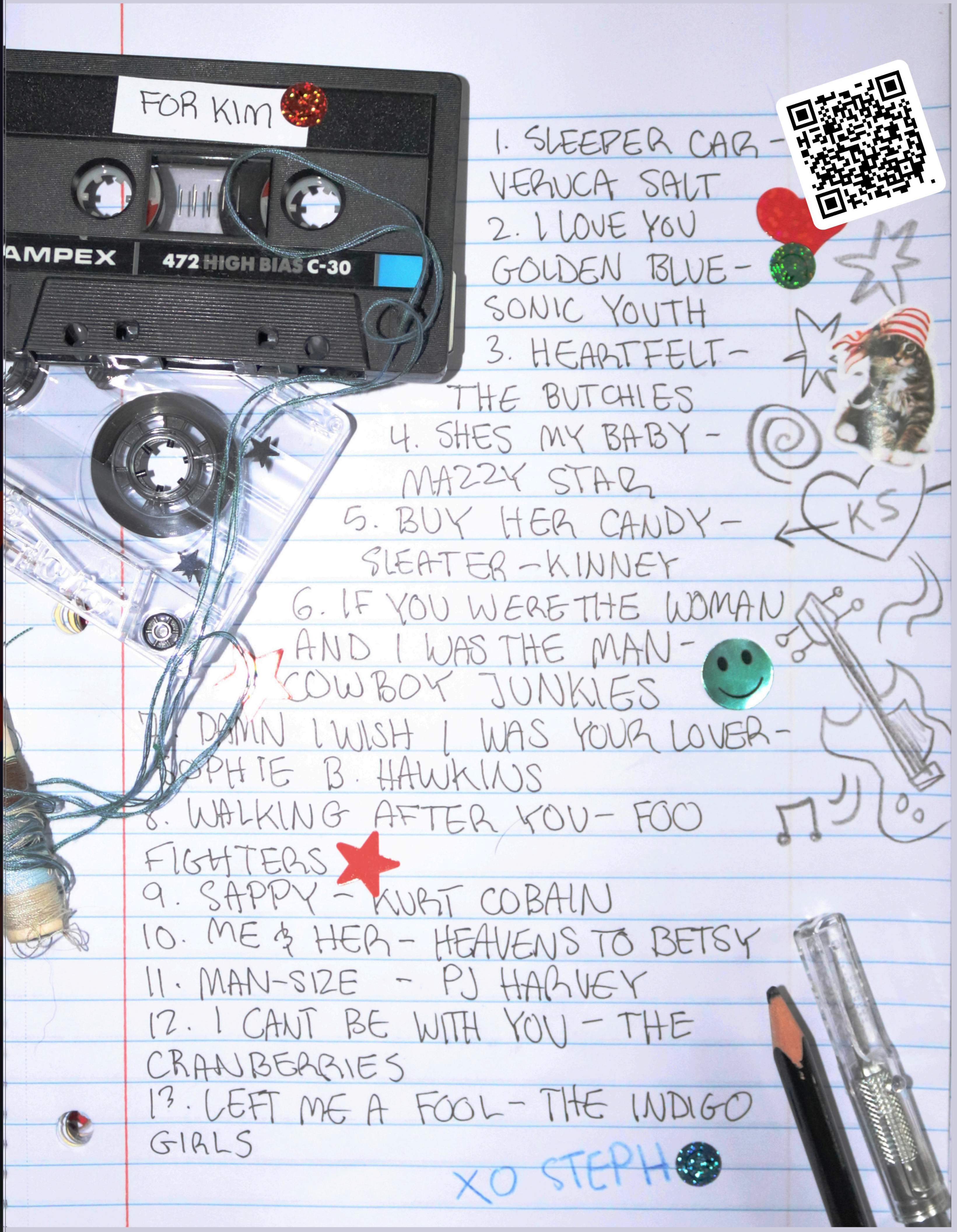





ST KIDS
RE LITTLE VERSIONS OF US!
ABORTION
IT'S AMAZING! YOU CAN ACTUALLY SEE US IN THEM
RE LITTLE MIRACLE
HAT ACTION MONE W
AR MORE HARROW
AFTER ONLY ONE MONTH OF
INCARCERATION,

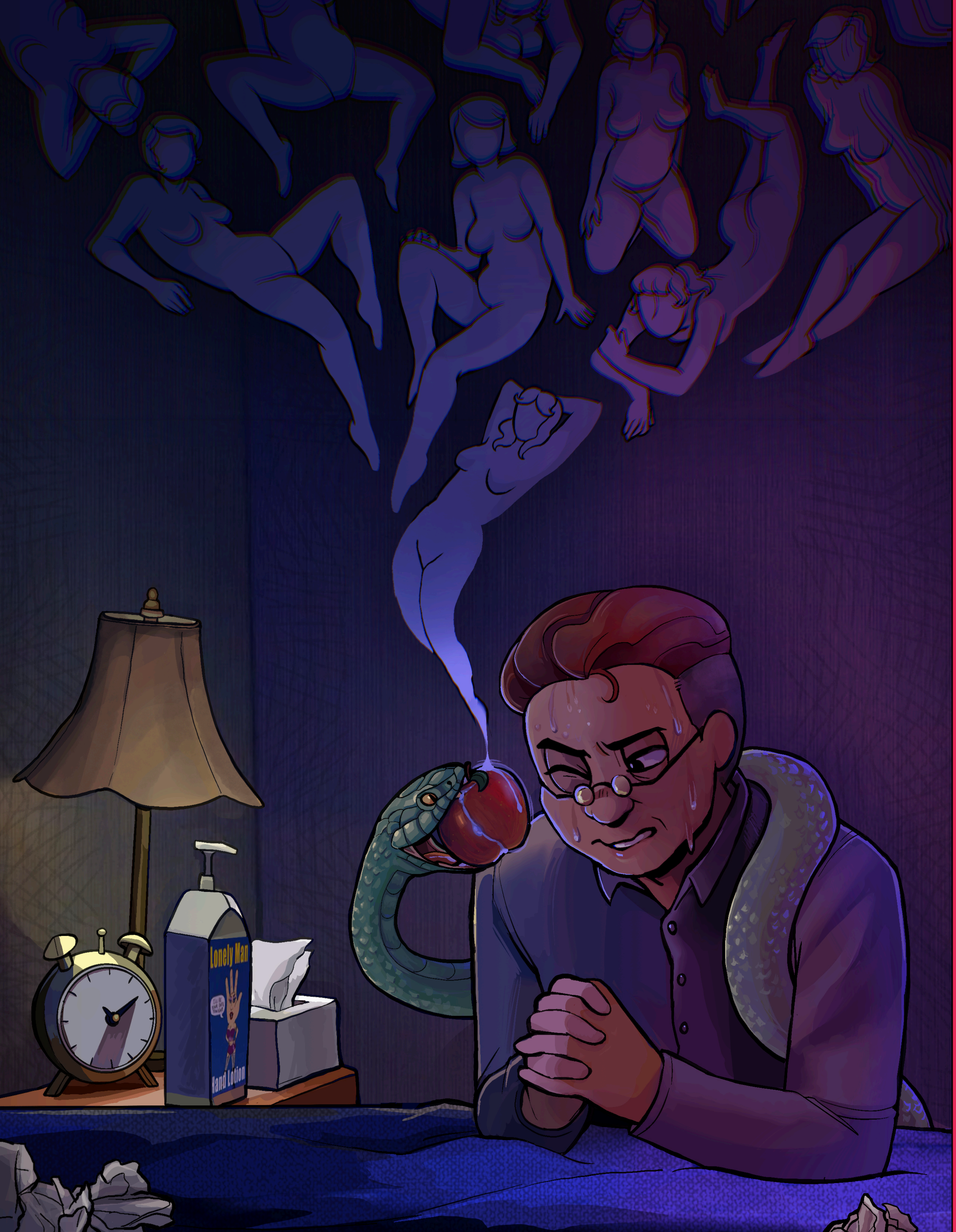


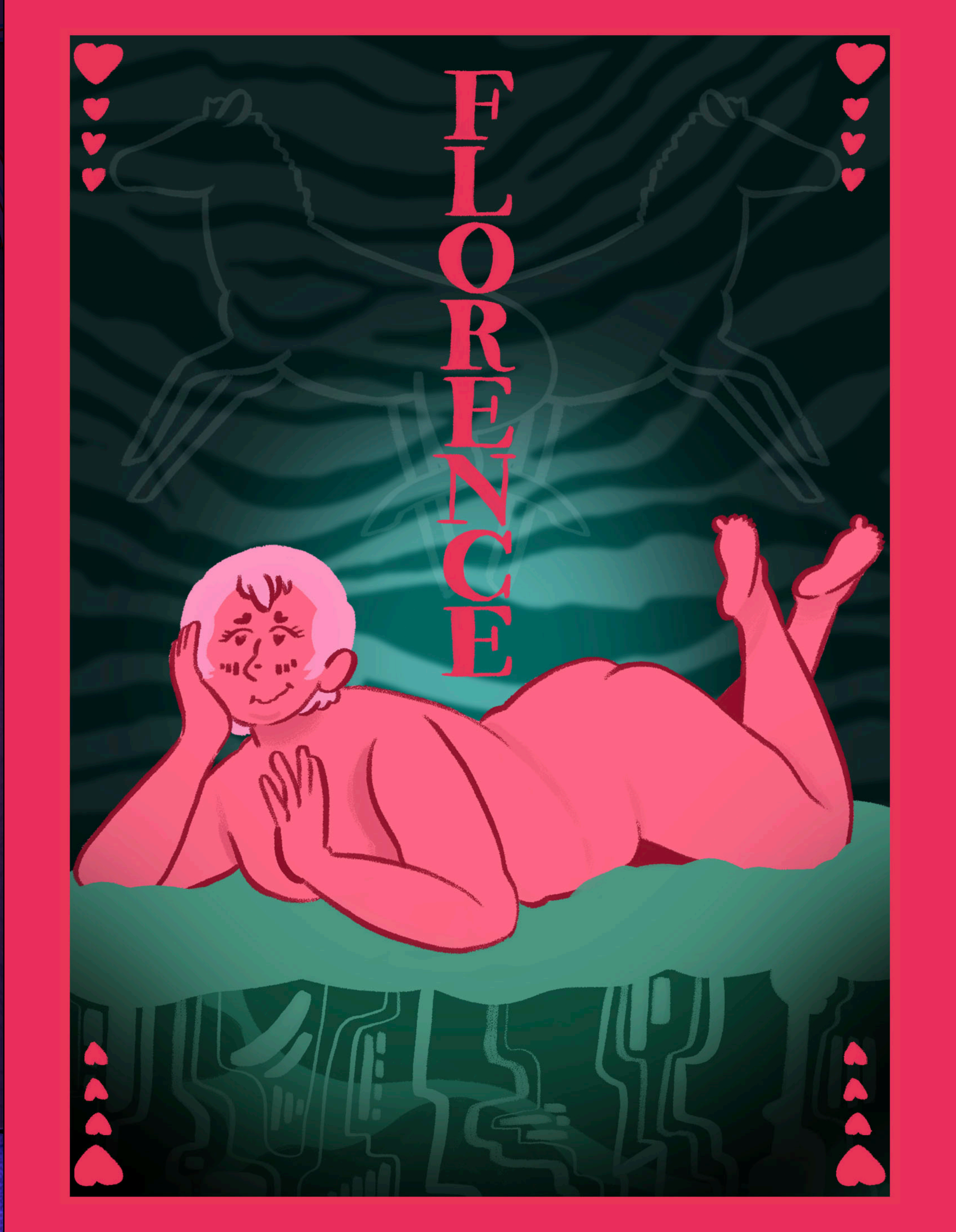


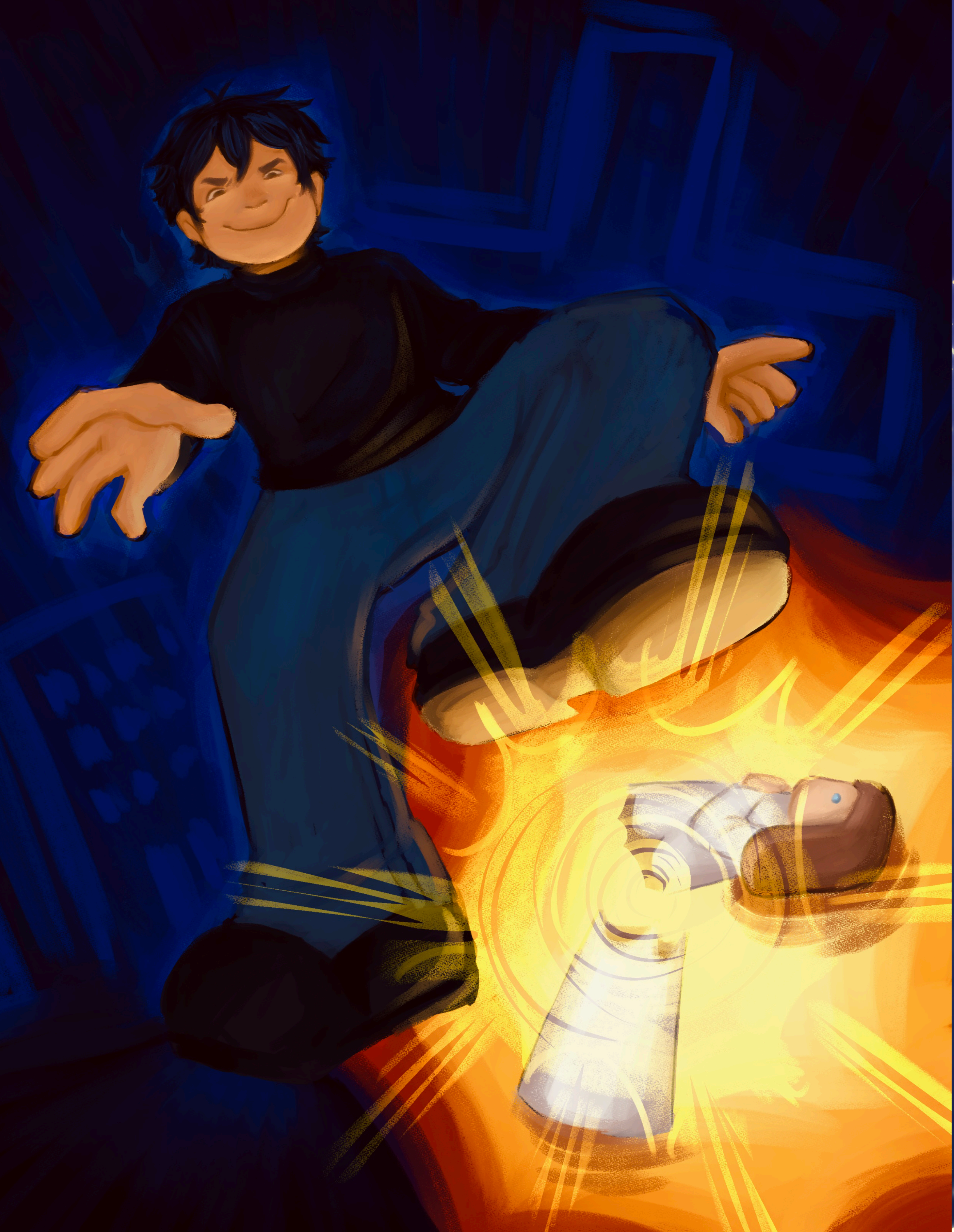

FOR KIM
AMPEX
472 HIGH BIAS C-30
KS

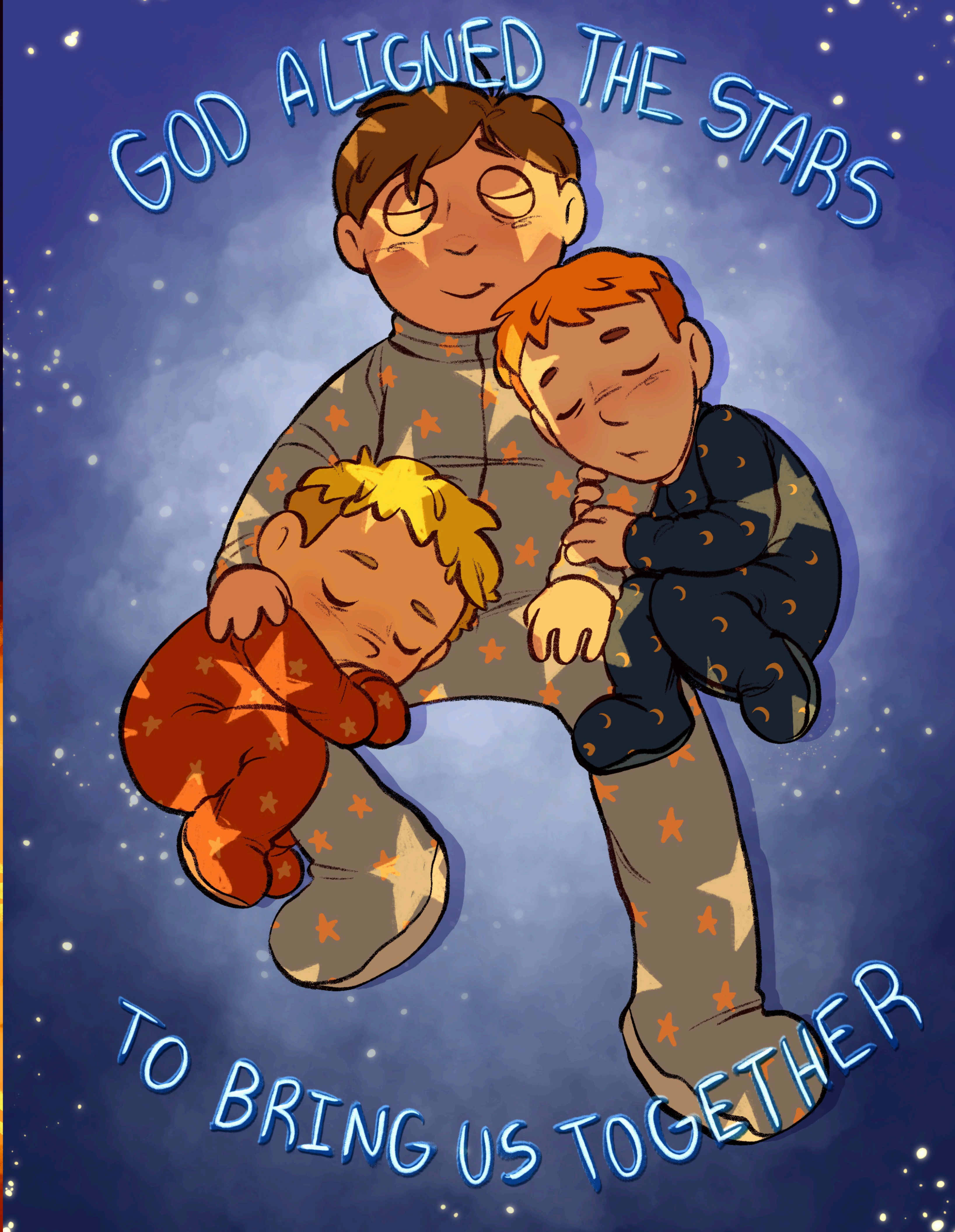
1. SLEEPER CAR - VERUCA SALT
2. I LOVE YOU GOLDEN BLUE - SONIC YOUTH
3. HEARTFELT - THE BUTCHIES
4. SHES MY BABY - MAZZY STAR
5. BUY HER CANDY - SLEATER-KINNEY
6. IF YOU WERE THE WOMAN AND I WAS THE MAN - COWBOY JUNKIES
7. DAMN I WISH I WAS YOUR LOVER - SOPHIE B. HAWKINS
8. WALKING AFTER YOU - FOO FIGHTERS
9. SAPPY - KURT COBAIN
10. ME & HER - HEAVENS TO BETSY
11. MAN-SIZE - PJ HARVEY
12. I CANT BE WITH YOU - THE CRANBERRIES
13. LEFT ME A FOOL - THE INDIGO GIRLS

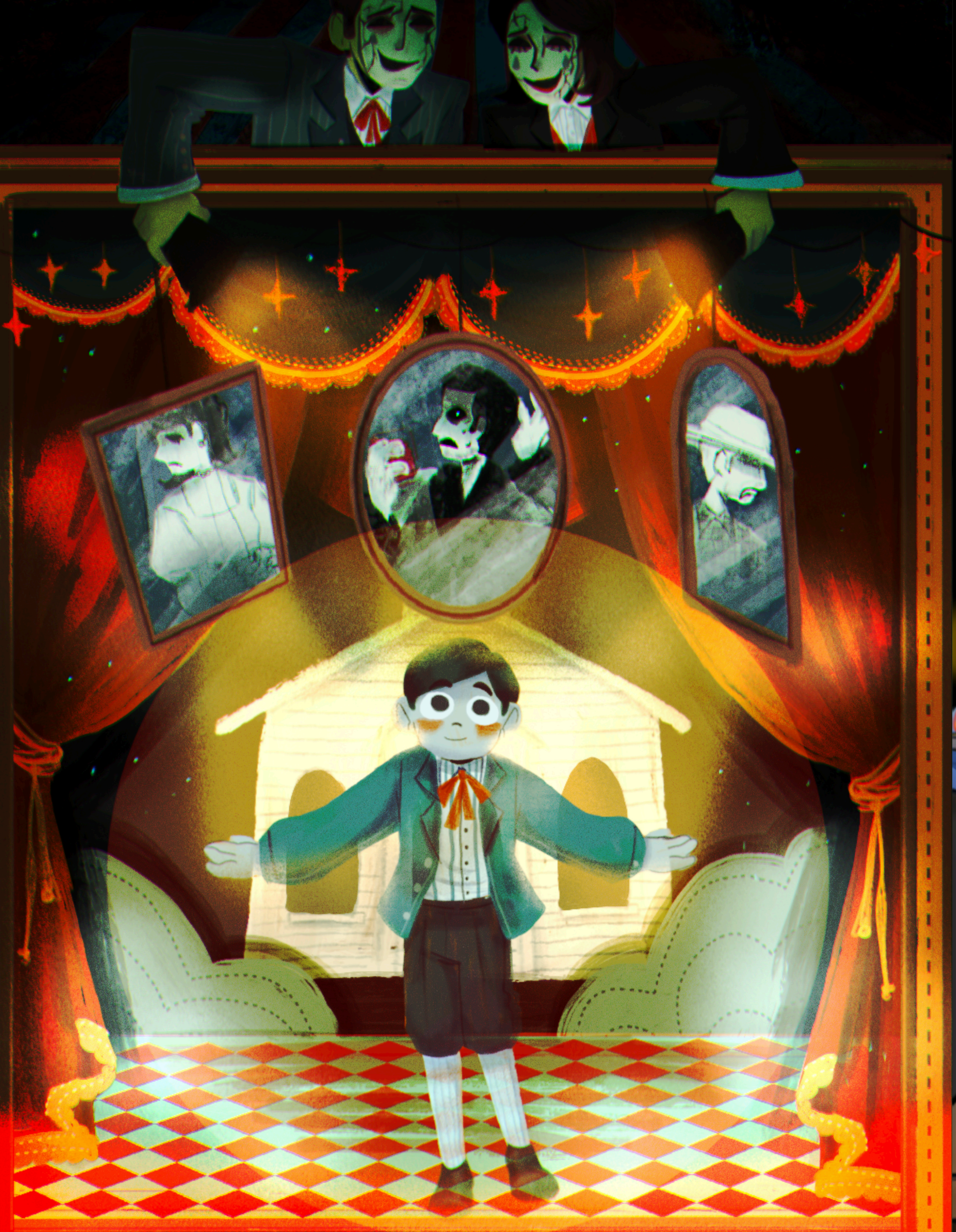
XO STEPH

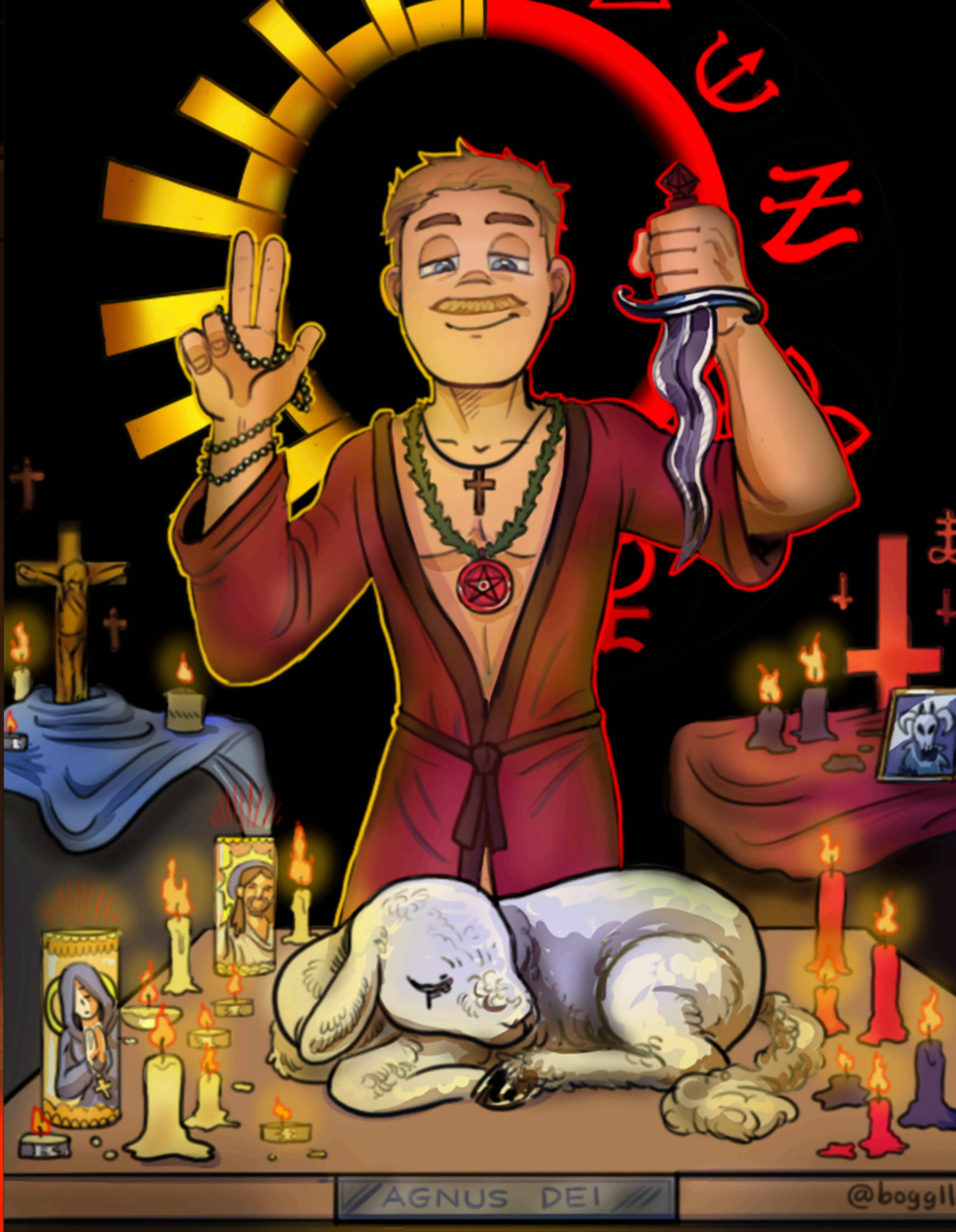

Lonely Man
Hand Lotion


FLORENCE



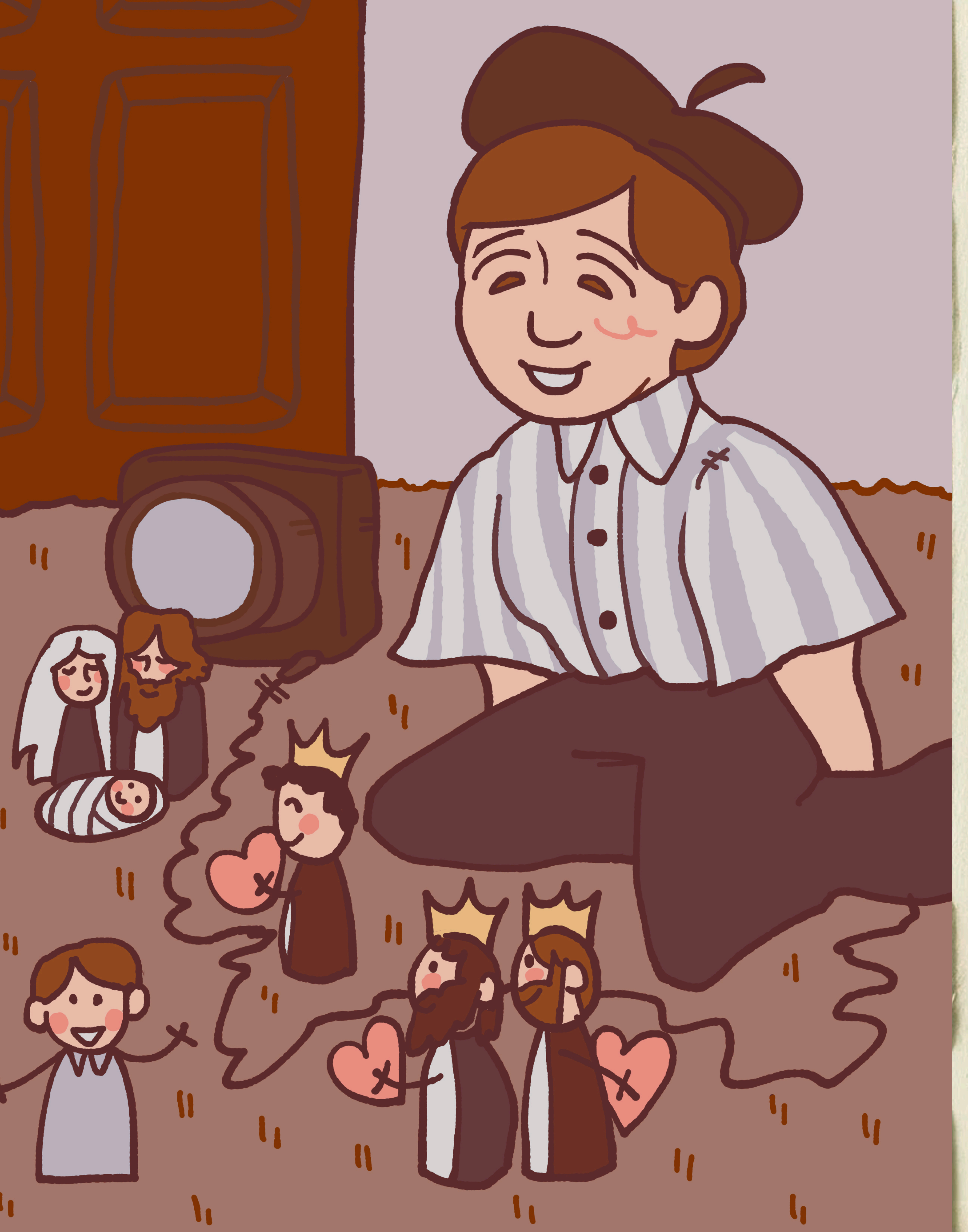

GOD ALIGNED THE STARS
TO BRING US TOGETHER



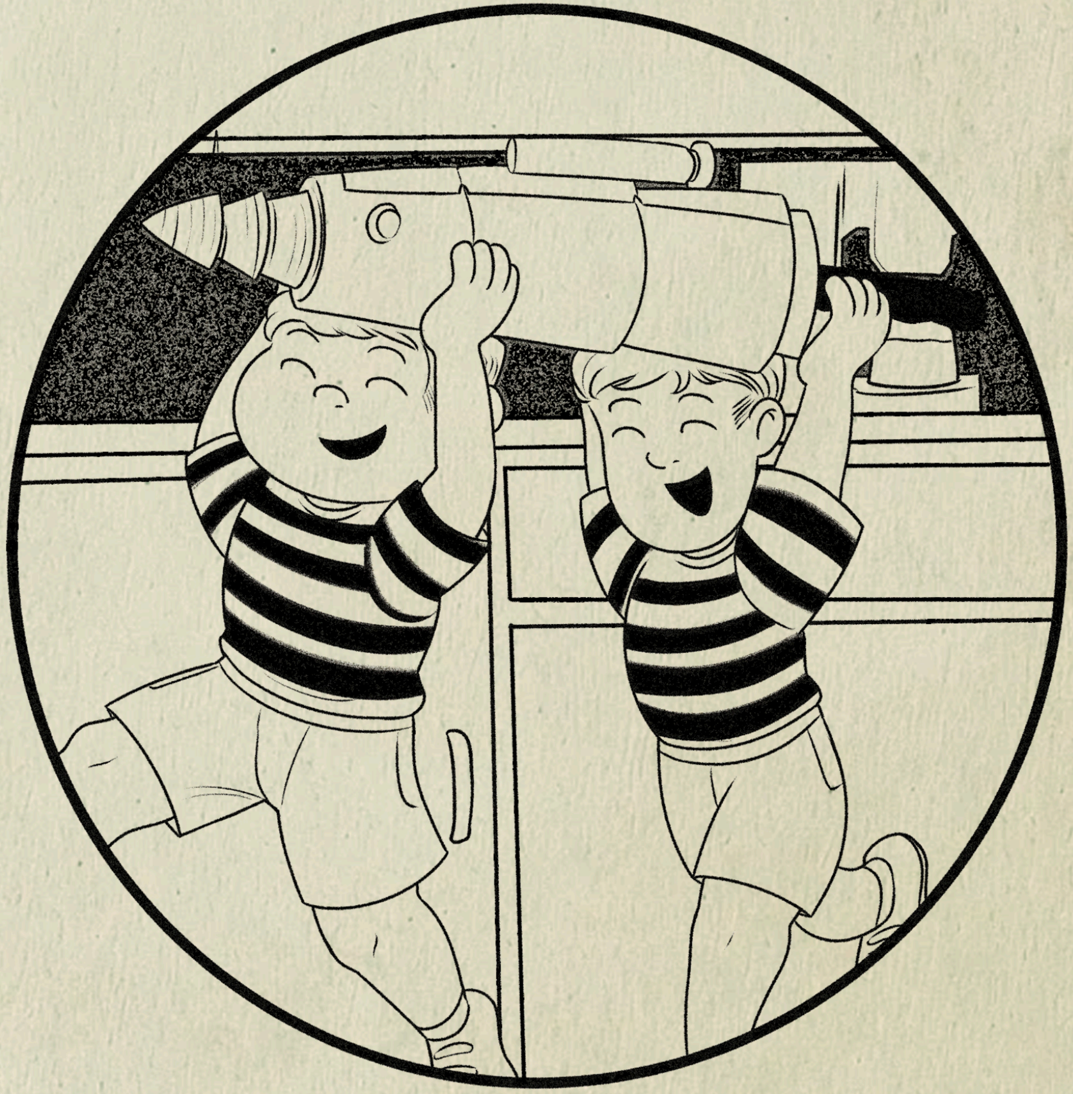

AGNUS DEI
@boggl

VALENTINE

by callista white



LET THERE BE HYPE



"We love playing with mommy's toys!"

OREL'S TRAVELS

NAVY PIER
DOCK STREET
TIVOLI
ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

WRIGLEY FIELD
HOME OF CHICAGO CUBS
TOYOTA

MAKING OREL

AND SETTING HIM FREE

chest bottom
waist/belly button
knees
above
ankles/shin
Super Sculpey

by Jay K.

TEAMOREL.COM

TEAM OREL IS AN UNOFFICIAL, NON-PROFIT FAN PAGE DEDICATED TO PRESERVING A SHOW THAT MANY PEOPLE DEEPLY CARE ABOUT.

TEAM OREL IS A COLLECTIVE EFFORT BETWEEN JUSTIN YATES & NIKOLAS KNEUPPER.

AFTERWORD

by: Team Orel

When Team Orel was asked to write the afterword for this project, we were thrilled and honored. It is amazing to us to see the love Moral Orel has been receiving over the past few years. This generation has really attached itself to the show, and as superfans ourselves, we couldn't be happier.

Truthfully, we were a bit hesitant–for a few reasons. This isn't to say we were hesitant about the zine project or the team working on it, but rather, we were hesitant about writing this afterword because we asked ourselves, how do we encapsulate our thoughts on Moral Orel in a brief and concise way? We love this show so much–how in the world can we sum it all up in just a few paragraphs?

We considered approaching this afterword from a few different angles: focusing on an overarching theme, choosing one singular topic fans would want to read about, sharing our personal views on Moral Orel, providing a basic synopsis, or writing a love letter that expresses our gratitude–versus a cold, informational write-up.

Do we write an objective piece that discusses the numerous themes Moral Orel tackles? Do we explore the satire and dark comedy the show is known for, or the taboo aspects of American religious and moral culture displayed in every episode? Do we highlight the hilarious examples of hypocrisy, the painful exploration of trauma, or the failings of rigid dogma?

Or do we write a subjective piece that explores why our team feels this show is so important? Should we explain how we related to certain characters, our love for stop-motion animation, our appreciation for the cast and crew's work, or how much we laugh at the silliness of Orel's blind trust in his faith?

Should we explain why we created the website, why we're trying to preserve the puppets, why Adult Swim canceled the show, or why any of this matters?

To be completely honest with all of you, this show has been a huge part of our (Justin & Nik - Team Orel) lives for many years. Before we started collecting and preserving this show as "Team Orel," we were superfans like many of you. When we sit back and think about it, it's impossible to put our love, appreciation, and thoughts about this show into just a few sentences. But we are honored to have been asked to be a part of this project, so we will try our best.

After much thought, the team landed on this question: What makes Moral Orel important?

From an objective standpoint, Moral Orel is important because it tackles many topics that other forms of media merely flirt with: domestic violence, addiction, love and hate, religion and loss of faith, repression, sexuality, authority, generational trauma, isolation, desperation, sexual trauma, neglect, and much more. Moral Orel is a show that can take a very serious topic, make it funny, tug at your heartstrings, and teach you a lesson–all at once. Many shows (live-action or animated) might touch on some of these aspects, but Moral Orel brings them all into the spotlight and shines a light on the true nature of humanity. Sometimes it explores a topic in a humorous way to highlight its absurdity; other times it presents a serious subject in a shocking, difficult-to-watch way that is relatable and unforgettable.

From a subjective standpoint, I (Justin) have expressed in several livestreams and interviews that I truly believe Moral Orel is unlike any other show I've ever seen. The show has been off the air for nearly 18 years now, and I've still yet to find anything like it. I watched it when it first aired on Adult Swim. I remember seeing the episode "Charity" and thinking to myself, This is hilarious, thought-provoking, and different. What am I watching, and how can I see more? I've seen multiple generations discover the show on different platforms since then, and it always surprises me how much people relate to it. The writers of Moral Orel hit a home run when they found a way to tap into the human condition.

The fact that the show continues to resonate with fans year after year is undeniable proof that the writers accomplished something other shows often struggle with. Maybe it's the subject matter being displayed through stop-motion animation instead of live-action, maybe it's the perfect blend of satire and dark comedy, or maybe the writing tackles timeless themes that remain relevant no matter how much time passes. Whatever the reason, this is a rare and lasting accomplishment. I truly believe that in another 20 years, Moral Orel will still be remembered as "one of the darkest shows on television" or "the greatest stop-motion show of all time."

Team Orel came together when Nik and I (Justin) realized we had a very similar connection to the show. Like many others, both Nik and I were raised in religious households. For various reasons, we both eventually moved away from our faith–questioning and evolving over the years. Yet, like Orel, we still believe there is a lot of good in the world. This show has been a friend to us both: a cast of characters we connect with, relate to, and–at times–are reminded of people we've encountered in our pasts.

After speaking with the show's staff and crew, we found that we also share similar ideologies with them. Many people look up to role models, family members, or partners for optimism and support. For us at Team Orel, the characters of Orel, Stephanie, and even Clay have been those inspirations. They're not only relatable but have also taught us personal lessons that helped us in meaningful ways. The same can be said for the characters who represent the darker sides of the story. I grew up in a household affected by domestic violence and alcoholism, and seeing Clay's downfall was not only shocking, but strangely comforting–familiar and relatable, as odd as that may sound.

While many view Moral Orel as just "a show that pokes fun at religion" or "a show trying to be controversial to stand out," we believe they're missing the point. Moral Orel critiques the distortion of religion–not religion itself. It is controversial, but not for controversy's sake. It's a show unafraid to explore how the human experience can challenge one's faith–and how that individual might lose, question, and even rediscover it through time, healing, and love.

When Team Orel began, we both agreed that this show had given us so much over the years–we wanted to give back. To the show. To the fans. To the world of Moral Orel. We wanted to preserve the puppets, locate lost media, talk to the crew, learn everything we could, and share it with others. With so many great shows fading away over time, we decided to do what we could to keep this one alive. Along the way, we've met countless fans who share the same love, connected with creators who still hold it dear, and welcomed new fans discovering the show every day.

We believe Moral Orel is incredibly important–especially because it gives a voice to those who often go unrepresented. The show features characters who reflect large, overlooked portions of our society: those who've lost faith, survivors of domestic violence, people rejected by their families, and many others. It's a one-of-a-kind show that dares to explore topics other networks won't touch. Orel (and many others) aren't just poster children for our team–they are for so many people. We want to make sure this show lives on for years to come. We believe it can truly help those who've lived through these very themes.

We are thrilled to be a part of this zine/community.

Thank YOU for supporting this project.

If you aren't familiar with Team Orel, please check out our website, watch some interviews on our YouTube page, or come say hi! We're always looking to make new friends.

Website: https://TeamOrel.com

Instagram: https://instagram.com/TeamOrelIG

YouTube: https://youtube.com/@teamorelyoutube

We would like to thank the following people: David Tuber, Rob Ronning, Britta Phillips, Carolyn Lawrence, Simon Ore, The Mystery Contributor, Ethan Marak, Dino Stamatopoulos, NumyMufn, Moralton University, and everyone who has supported us online–whether by visiting our site, watching interviews and lost media on YouTube, or following us on Instagram. Thank you so much for believing in our project. Your support keeps us growing.

We hope our project will be one of many that keeps the Moral Orel flame burning for years to come.

As of 2025, we've never seen this many active Moral Orel fans. We couldn't be happier to see so many people supporting something we hold so close to our hearts. Keep it up. The more noise we make, the more we keep the spirit of Orel alive.

And maybe... just maybe... more is on the horizon. We hear Dino has been writing. Fingers crossed!

- Justin Yates, TeamOrel.com

STAFF & CREW INTERVIEWS

TEAMOREL.COM
THE CAROLYN LAWRENCE INTERVIEW
Jimmy Neutron
Beforel Orel
SpongeBob SquarePants
Moral Orel
RESIDENT EVIL

THE BRITTA PHILLIPS INTERVIEW
Jem and The Holograms
TEAMOREL.COM
Moral Orel

The David Tuber Interview
TEAMOREL.COM

The Rob Ronning Interview
TEAMOREL.COM

OFFICIAL MERCHANDISE

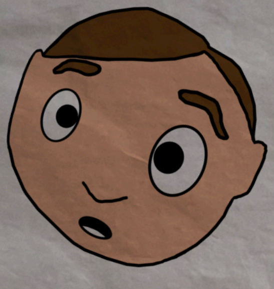
Moral Orel
Orel died for your sins.
CANCELLED
Moral Orel
Moral Orel Volume 2
Moral Orel Volume 3
Moral Orel
Complete Lessons Collection
Beforel Orel
Hotdog! David Tuber

TONS OF LOST MEDIA
44 NIGHTS OF OREL WITH DINO AND SCOTT
ABSTINENCE STORYBOARD & EPISODE COMPARISON
MORAL OREL BUMPS COMPILATION
POPE
EPISODE PROMOS
And so the story begins...

blurbs

[1]

I first watched Moral Orel back in late 2021, back when it was just beginning to regain popularity, thanks to a certain channel uploading the series in nearly untouched quality on YouTube (RIP). Over the past few years the show has inspired me to get better at art, introduced me to some cool people, and made me realize a lot about myself. I came out of watching it with a lot of excitement and passion, which led me to make my dedicated Tumblr.



From fan edits [1], to animation, to analysis of the show, to detailed art, my #1 motivator for being so active in this community was the amount of talent so many of you have.

When Grave messaged me asking if I wanted to be involved in this zine, I felt all kinds of emotions. On one hand, I honestly wasn't proud of a lot of my older posts. On the other, I was reminded of all the great memories I've made with this community. I knew the zine was going to be amazing, and looking at what everyone has submitted, I can say it is! - The Moral Goats

You guys are doing CRAZY work and it means so much to see a love letter to the series in the form of the zine. - alois

I like Moral Orel a lot! I was instantly taken by its humorous and intelligent commentary on issues impacted by religious fundamentalism, and even more gripped by the interpersonal conflicts it delved into as the show went on. It is truly a gem of a show that was far ahead of its time and cancelled far too early. - Kindheart525

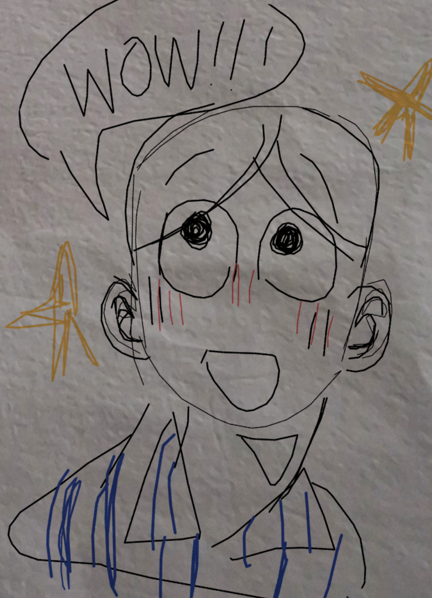
Golly! Moral Orel is one of those shows that hits you like a truck and keeps rolling— I'll never forget the way it made me feel the first time I watched it, and just how hard I fell in love. - amvipod

It's my favorite show, because it decided to be my favorite show. - Maggie Woods (mandrillose)

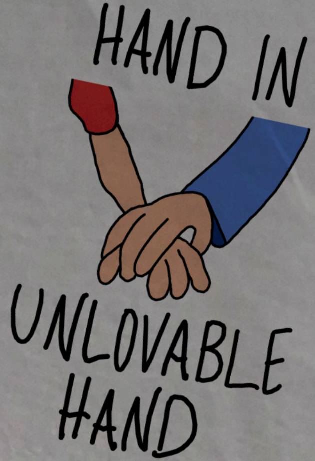
Moral Orel is a gorgeous piece of stop motion puppetry, and really makes you wonder, "Hey, are those deeply religious small town folks really doing okay?" - Mommagranate

Moral Orel is a kind of show that first makes you laugh and feel silly, and then hits you over the head with a baton. - AsuBakaa

Moral Orel killed my grandma ok - neverfilth



I've always found it to be a marvel of animated media with its witty writing and iconic art style. This show has brought me more opportunities than I've ever thought possible both as a cosplayer and actor, and I couldn't be more grateful to call myself a fan of it... - Arabella_Cos



It's beautifully made and perfectly merges the line of comedy and meaningful storytelling! - NoMoreSopha

I like Moral Orel as much as Clay Puppington likes to avoid responsibility. - Rodent Slime

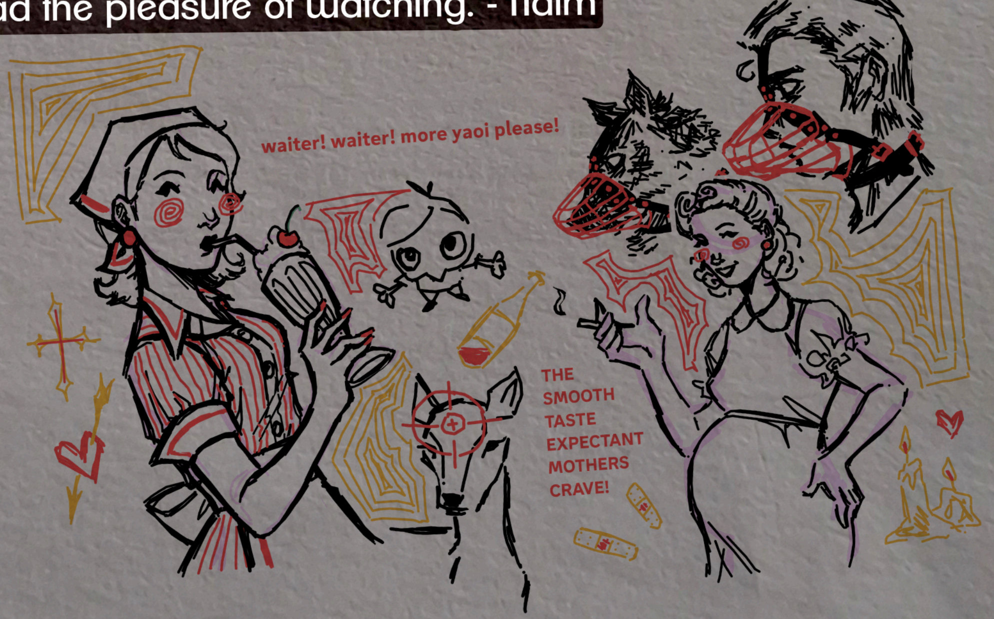
I like Moral Orel as much as Bloberta likes cleaning. One of the many reasons why is Flygron's sweaty man tits. - Rodent Slime

I don't think there's another show that has made me laugh, cry, rage, cringe, and be shocked, at least to the extent that this show has. - Bradenster

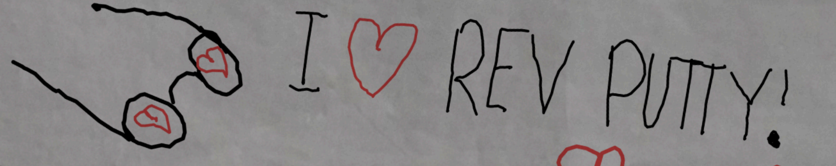
I developed a thesis in undergrad that I owe some heavy inspiration to Moral Orel for. - Mo Overholt

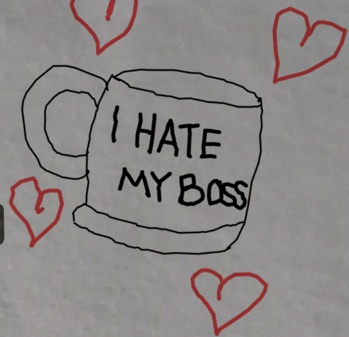
Literally one of the best things I've ever had the pleasure of watching. - Naim

My only wish is that there were more of it. - boggle


waiter! waiter! more yaoi please!
THE SMOOTH TASTE EXPECTANT MOTHERS CRAVE!

IT'S JUST KETCHUP





There are a ton of reasons I like this show, but I think the most important is it's willingness to sympathetic to the characters. Many of them are objectively bad to themselves and others, but so much of it feels out of their control. - Clara Wintters

And even though these characters are really awful people, the story still finds a way for the audience to connect and sympathise with them, while also understanding the idea of accountability and hypocrisy. - coi_arts

wassup, dudes!

What starts as a dark comedy quickly transforms into one of the most emotionally raw and psychologically rich animated series I've ever seen. It unpacks generational trauma, repression, addiction, faith, and forgiveness with a quiet honesty that sneaks up on you. - Redzpuppet2.0

There is something so special about the fact it was made with a satirical tone yet gave respect to matters that are important. - thesockdrawer._

Asking "Do you know Moral Orel?" has unironically become a thing that instantly bonds me to any stranger who answers in the affirmative. - cwunshine

In what I assumed was a fever-induced hallucination (but was, in fact, just the show), I felt a deep emotional connection with the funny puppet on the TV screen. - Barb D'Wire

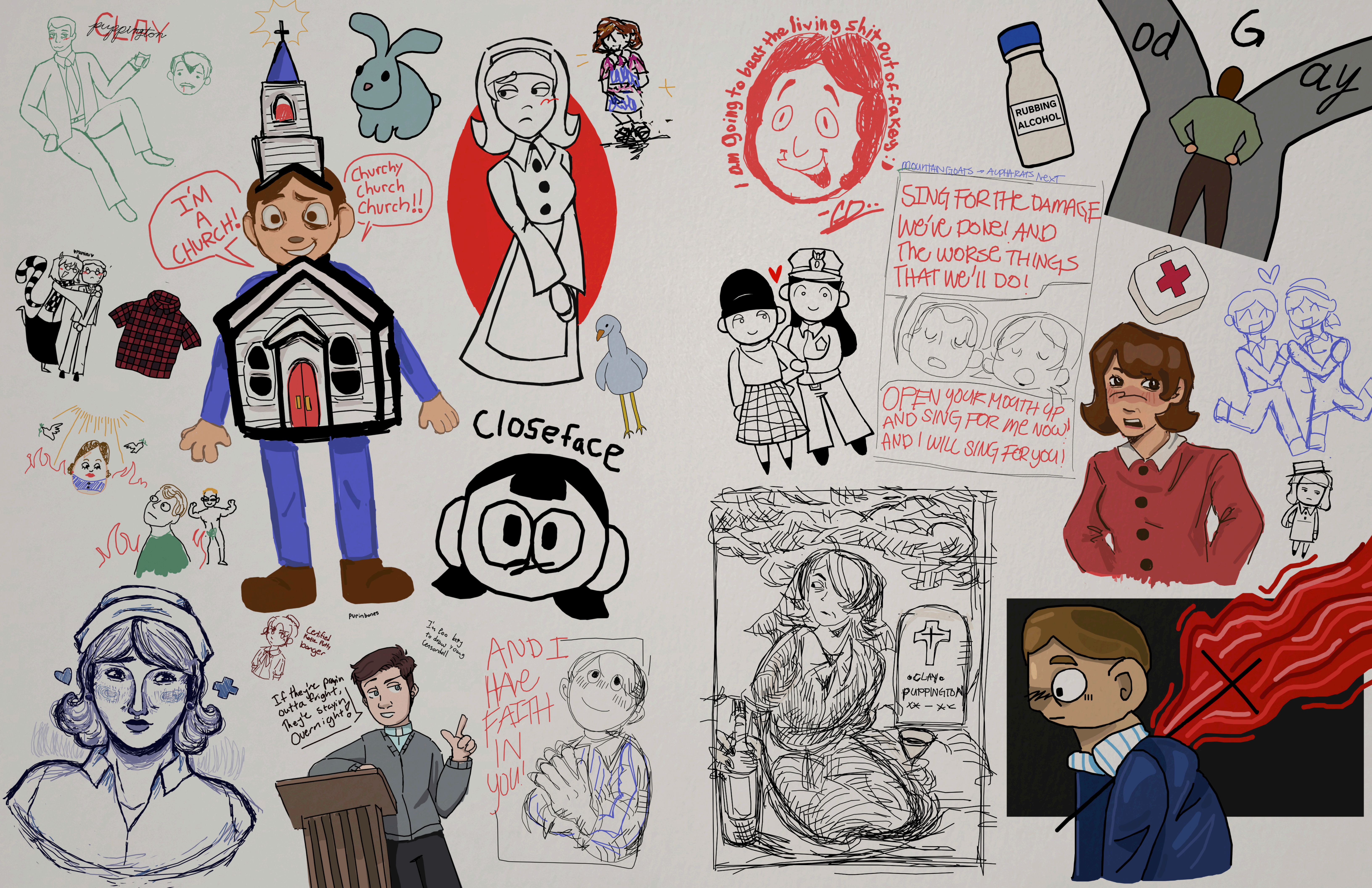
I absolutely adore this show. Critiquing the institutions of America, especially 1950s America, is one of my great artistic passions. - Decodium

All the characters have something to relate to and I love how its a reflection of hypocrisy. They're not afraid to be blunt about real life issues and beliefs...I am praying adult swim picks up the movie script! - Aveisure

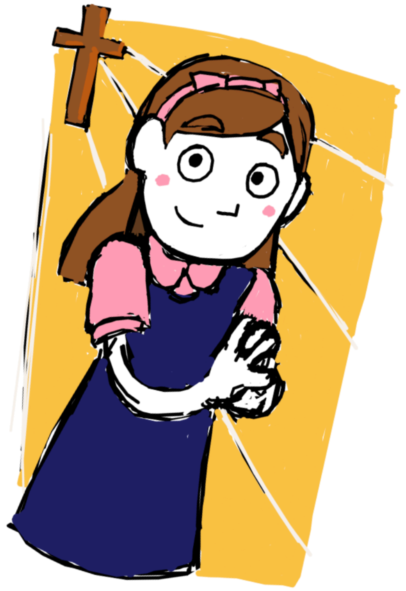
Moral Orel is one of my favorite "tough watch" shows where I love it but also can't watch it primarily because of how well written it is. Everytime it seriously tackles a subject, it does it so realistically it's extremely relatable to the point that it hurts. - Thalia

Not only this, but the creator of the show gives me hope that an artist from my background can indeed create something deep and beautiful and influential. - Tobernaut

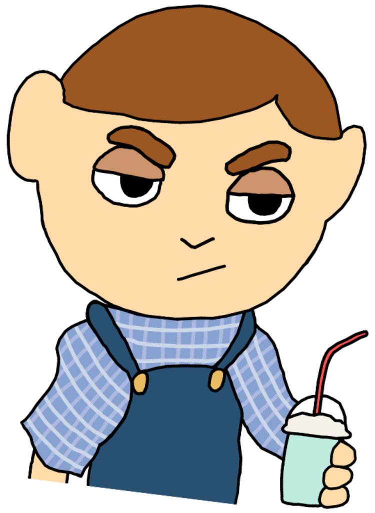
It makes me believe, that despite everything I've gone through, I too can be the best version of myself in the end. - Maryhanaae4


CLAY
puppington
♥mamirev♥
I'M A CHURCH!
Churchy church church!!
Closeface
purinbones
Certified Hattie Patty banger
I'm too lazy to draw young Censordoll
If they're prayin outta fright, They're stayin Overnight!
AND I HAVE FAITH IN YOU!
I am going to beat the living shit out of fakey :)
-CD..
RUBBING ALCOHOL
God
Gay
MOUNTAIN GOATS → ALPHARATS Next
SING FOR THE DAMAGE WE'VE DONE! AND THE WORSE THINGS THAT WE'LL DO!
OPEN YOUR MOUTH UP AND SING FOR ME NOW! AND I WILL SING FOR YOU!
CLAY PUPPINGTON
XX – XX

APPENDICES



NO THOUGHTS

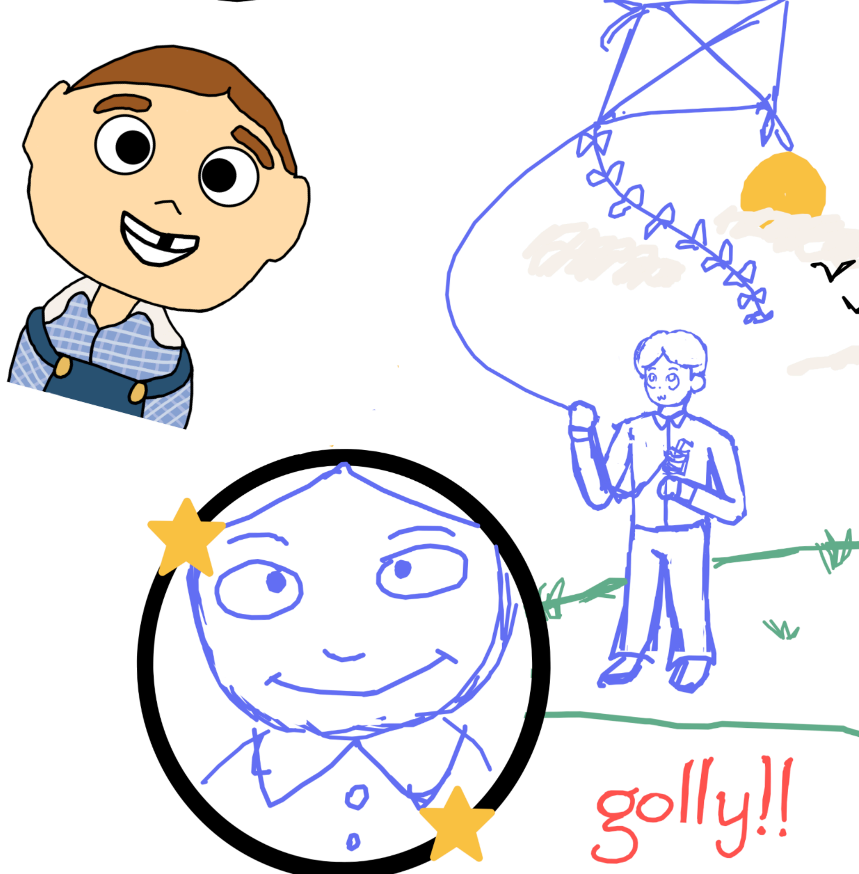


aether | 64, 114, 115
alois | 89
amvipod | 11
Antyoneelse | 1, 22, 38, 39, 120
Arabella_Cos | 22, 23
AriaMoon09 | 5, 22
aveisure | 31
Barb D'Wire | 5, 12
Bethpencilart | 29
bogglle | 4, 101
Bowledburrito | 98
bumblingbabooshka | 60
cottoncandycraze | 78
Cherrytastiq | 15, 16, 41, 120
Clara Winters | 91
coi-arts | 100
CurvyWireCos | 23
cwunshine | 93, 103
Day | 118, 116, 117
Deercervidae | 82, 83, 84, 92
Dr-Chosenberg | 13, 21, 29, 50, 54, 58, 120
Dshksh | 29
Grave Circuit | 1, 22, 23, 29, 120
Gio | 46, 50, 55
Hatteri | 32, 33, 50
Jay K. | 108
Jess | 40
Joe Iovino | 34*, 35, 74
Jonnie | 72
Kacy Raider | 37
Katie | 49, 116
Khanumshahrzad | 29
kindheart525 | 120
Kyliee | 23
lali | 62, 63
Laura-T-Draws | 18, 79
Lauren | 2, 3
Lili G | 47
Lindsay Johll | 4, 5, 6, 113, 114, 116, 117
Logan M | 34*, 35
Lucy | 82, 83
Luna G | 85
Maggie Woods (mandrillose) | 8, 50, 70, 71, 86, 102
Mark Johll | 114
maryhanaae4 | 61, 113, 116, 117
Mia Lea Kahn | 8, 52, 53
Mirrorama | 90
Mommagranate | 22, 23
Moralton University | 44, 45, 50
Nasuablatta | 6
neverfilth | 9, 19, 25, 29, 50, 81, 97, 105, 120
Orel's Travels | 106, 107
Orozitzkasb | 24
otorin | 10
PEGASO | 20, 50
PossessedPasta | 14, 80
purinbones | 4, 5, 59, 116
Radical Robot | 36
Randy | 7, 119
rismortiis | 17, 88
Riz Daleney | 50, 96
RodentSlime | 75
Rook Thomas | 57
Rusty | 22, 116
Sally O | 42, 43
Sarah Foley | 4, 5, 6, 65, 87
Shelby Johll | 115
Sherifa | 117
sillygirlscribbles | 28
sinvilles | 29, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73, 120
Sketch | 26, 27, 116
Sonoma Camozzi | 94
sternin | 77, 104
Sul04 | 48, 115
Tanblaque | 50, 56
Team Orel | 109, 110, 111, 112
The Moral Goats | 113
TheToonyGiulia | 30, 50, 116
Thesockdrawer._ | 99
Thomas Richardson | 48
Toffeels | 116
time out tales | 76
Tophat.Cosplay | 23
Vorg | 116, 117, 118, 119
Walter | 22, 116, 117, 118, 119
Xandy Hurley | 95

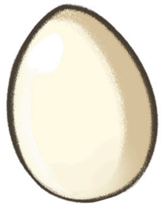
*at the art director's instruction layout and text presented in its original form

RANDY
HOLY BIBLE

Friends!!
Bartholomew
me
Doughy
Joe
Tommy

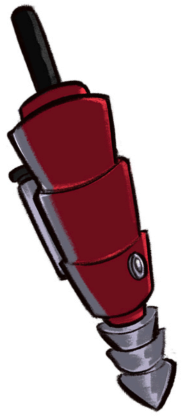


ADDITIONAL THANKS



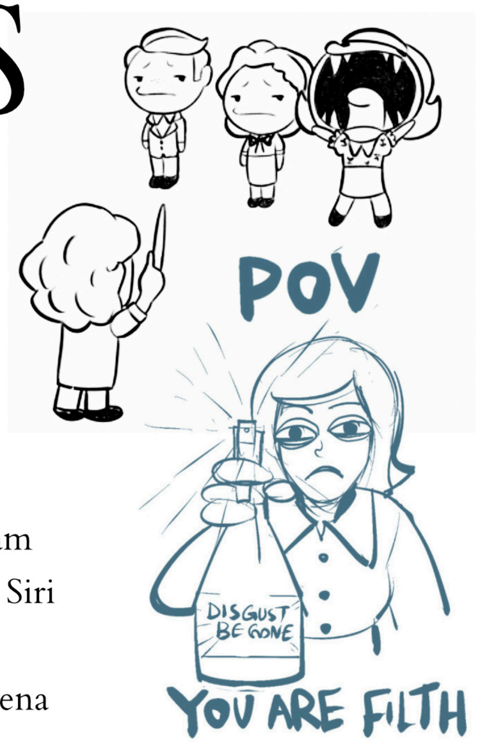
ITS JUST KETCHUP

Kaiden G
Violet
Dino Stamatopoulos
Emily Cathey
Erikka Miller
Harley Storie
Lexi Barnes
Matthew Davis
Robin Mouser



I HATE MY BOSS

STAFF CREDITS



Director of Operations: Grave Circuit
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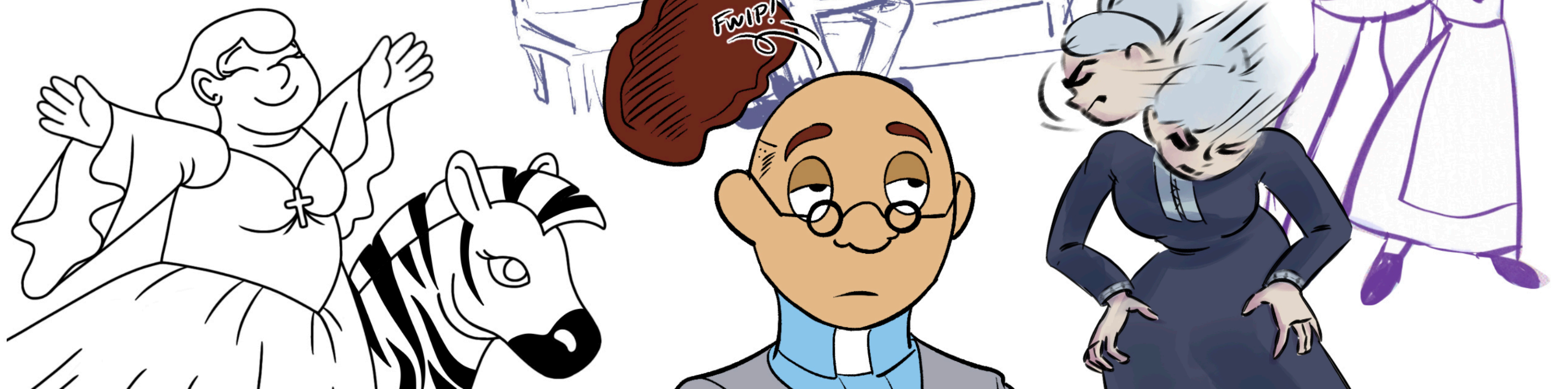
Design Specialist: Cherrytastiq
Scheduling Coordinator: Sena
Coordinators: Grave Circuit, Antyoneelse, Glam
Quality Assurance: Sena, Wes, Grave Circuit, Siri
Promotion Committee: Glam
Financial Committee: Grave Circuit, Glam, Sena
Curators: Wes, Sena, Glam, Antyoneelse
Side-Zine Design Team: Lauren, Sinvilles, Cherrytastiq, Amvipod
Sticker Sheet Design: Sena

Proceeds from this zine went to the following charities:

The Trevor Project — Saving Young LGBTQ Lives
Islamic Relief USA
National Immigrant Justice Center
National LGBTQ Task Force — be you.
Medecins Sans Frontieres — Doctors Without Borders
Indigenous Women Rising